

Juristat Article

Measuring violence against women: Statistical trends

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- | | |
|----------------|--|
| . | not available for any reference period |
| ... | available for a specific reference period |
| ... | not applicable |
| 0 | true zero or a value rounded to zero |
| 0 ^s | value rounded to 0 (zero) where there is a meaningful distinction between true zero and the value that was rounded |
| P | preliminary |
| r | revised |
| X | suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the <i>Statistics Act</i> |
| E | use with caution |
| F | too unreliable to be published |
| * | significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$) |

Note

Data on annual admissions to shelters are under revision due to incorrect reporting by a survey respondent. Revised data will be released when available.

Measuring violence against women: Statistical trends

Foreword

For the past three decades, Federal-Provincial-Territorial (FPT) Ministers responsible for the Status of Women have shared a common vision to end violence against women in all its forms. Violence against women in Canada is a serious, pervasive problem that crosses every social boundary and affects communities across the country. It remains a significant barrier to women's equality and has devastating impacts on the lives of women, children, families and Canadian society as a whole.

This report marks the third time that the FPT Status of Women Forum has worked with Statistics Canada to add to the body of evidence on gender-based violence. *Assessing Violence Against Women: A Statistical Profile* was released in 2002 and was followed by *Measuring Violence Against Women: Statistical Trends 2006*. The 2006 report expanded the analysis into new areas, presenting information on Aboriginal women and women living in Canada's territories. The current report maintains this important focus and also includes information on dating violence, violence against girls and violence that occurs outside of the intimate partner/family context. It also shows trends over time and provides data at national, provincial/territorial, and census metropolitan area levels. A study on the economic impacts of one form of violence against women, spousal violence, is also presented.

We acknowledge that there is more to learn to provide a complete picture of violence against women and girls. For example, there are new and emerging issues such as cyber-violence and areas where data gaps continue to exist, such as trafficking in persons, as well as an increasing emphasis on building evidence about promising prevention and intervention practices. Ongoing research and analysis will further our understanding of the complex, gendered dimensions of violence in all its forms and how women's experiences of violence intersect with other aspects of their lives.

This report was designed to reach a wide audience. It is intended to support policy and program development and decision making for governments, non-governmental organizations, service providers, academics, researchers and all others working to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls. We are confident that as this body of knowledge continues to advance, it will promote prevention efforts and enhance responses to women and girls who experience violence in our communities.

FPT Senior Officials responsible for the Status of Women

Introduction

Violence against women has been recognized, at both the national and international levels, as a serious and ongoing impediment to gender equality and women's human rights and fundamental freedoms (United Nations 1993). By understanding the various dimensions of this global problem through data collection and analysis, decision makers are better able to develop and evaluate measures designed to prevent and eliminate violence against women.

In particular, measures based on gender-specific data analysis can more effectively address factors associated with violence against girls and women, as well as the particular needs of victims. Previous research has consistently shown that violence against women differs in important ways from violence against men, notably who is most often the perpetrator (e.g., family, acquaintance, or stranger), where this victimization occurs (within or outside the home), and the types of offences (Johnson 2006, Johnson and Dawson 2011). Other key gender differences include the severity of the violence and consequences of victimization (Vaillancourt 2010, Johnson and Dawson 2011).

Gender-based analysis on violence against women, while helping to inform policies and programs, can also serve to increase general awareness on the nature and extent of violence against women in the Canadian context.

In 2000, the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers responsible for Status of Women commissioned Statistics Canada to develop a set of statistical indicators on violence against women aimed at establishing benchmarks for monitoring changes over time and highlighting emerging issues. These indicators were first published in a report entitled *Assessing Violence Against Women: A Statistical Profile* (2002). The report was subsequently updated and expanded in 2006. The current report represents the third edition of this profile, which sets out to examine the current scope, nature and consequences of violence against women in Canada, as well as trends in women's experiences of violence.

Defining violence against women

The scope and definition of violence against women varies widely, ranging from definitions restricted to specific forms of violence against women to the more inclusive definition adopted by the United Nations (UN). The 1993 UN *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women* has defined violence against women as:

any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life (UN 1993).

This definition encompasses all forms of violence against women and includes the wide array of violence perpetrated in both the public and private spheres of women's lives. For the purpose of this article, Statistics Canada uses this internationally accepted definition. In doing so, it is possible to situate women's experiences of violence in various contexts, and to illustrate how this violence differs in prevalence, severity, and impact from violence perpetrated against men.

At the same time, it is noteworthy that the types of violence examined in this report are largely limited to those acts that reach the criminal threshold. While it is understood that violence against women exists on a continuum from name calling to homicide (World Health Organization n.d.), statistical data presented in this article are based primarily on *Criminal Code* definitions. One exception is the analysis of self-reported emotional and financial abuse within the context of spousal violence. These forms of violence typically do not constitute crimes under the *Criminal Code*.

Measuring violence against women

To provide a comprehensive picture of the extent and nature of violence against women, both police-reported crime data and self-reported victimization data are used. Each source has its own benefits and limitations to measuring violence against women.

Police-reported surveys provide an indicator of the extent and nature of all *Criminal Code* offences that come to the attention of police. These administrative data are collected on an annual basis and include all police services in Canada. As a result, yearly trend analysis, as well as regional analysis at the provincial/territorial and census metropolitan area (CMA) levels, is possible. Two police-reported surveys, namely the Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Survey and the Homicide Survey, collect data on the characteristics of victims, accused and incidents. Overall violent crime rates are based on the number of victims per 100,000 population, while homicide rates are based on the number of victims per million population.

Police-reported surveys are limited to only those criminal incidents that are reported to and substantiated by police. **Self-reported data** from the General Social Survey (GSS) complement police-reported data by providing information on self-reported incidents of victimization that are both reported and unreported to police. It is also able to provide information on non-violent forms of abuse (e.g., emotional and financial abuse), consequences of victimization, levels of reporting to police, and social service utilization.

Conducted every five years since 1988, the GSS on victimization is a sample survey of Canadians aged 15 years and older. This excludes individuals living in institutions (e.g., long-term care facilities, prisons), individuals unable to speak English or French, and households without landline telephones or only cell phones. One component of the survey interviews Canadians on their experiences of victimization over the previous 12-month period. Captured are eight offence types, three of which are violent offences (physical assault, sexual assault and robbery). These incidents can be examined alongside a range of the socio-demographic characteristics of victims, providing 12-month estimates of the prevalence of self-reported violent incidents against women. Prevalence rates are expressed as a rate of incidents per 1,000 population.

In addition, since 1999, the GSS on victimization has contained a special module on spousal violence, which captures detailed information on the dynamics of violence within spousal and common-law relationships. Canadians who had contact with a spouse in the five years prior to the interview are asked a series of questions on violence by their current and/or previous spouse and common-law partners. The survey is able to produce 12-month and 5-year estimates of spousal violence. Since many questions ask about victims' overall experiences of spousal victimization, rather than specific incidents of violence, the prevalence of spousal violence is presented as a percentage of Canadian population who were victimized, rather than a rate of incidents per 1,000 population.

For the purpose of this article, analysis of self-reported spousal violence is primarily based on 5-year prevalence rates in order to facilitate reliable estimates of small subgroups in the population, such as Aboriginal women. In some instances, notably when analyzing particular risk factors for spousal violence, a one-year snapshot is used, recognizing that some factors, such as age and household income, can change over time. For violence outside of spousal relationships, analysis is based on 12-month incident prevalence rates.

As with any sample survey, there is a possibility of sampling error with the GSS. Estimates are suppressed when it is determined that the probability of sampling error is too high to be reliably presented. Unless otherwise stated, all differences are statistically significant.

To provide an indicator of the availability and use of services for female victims, the analysis in this article also draws on information from two administrative surveys, namely the Transition Home Survey and the Victims' Services Survey. Both surveys are conducted every two years.

The organization of this *Juristat* article

While the majority of this article will focus on violence against women aged 15 years and older, it is recognized that violence directed at females often begins before adolescence. Consequently, the article also examines the victimization experiences of girls. Where possible, data are disaggregated by geographic and population groupings to provide a sense of the diversity of women's experiences of victimization. These can include variations by region, age, Aboriginal identity, and sexual orientation.

Within this article, special attention is paid to the situation of violence against Aboriginal women. Recent reports have shown that levels of victimization are more elevated among this particular group of women (Brennan 2011, Perreault 2011). Due to a lack of consistent reporting of Aboriginal status by police services, analysis on the victimization of Aboriginal women is largely limited to self-reported victimization data from the GSS.

Where possible, findings are presented by various levels of geography to highlight regional variations in the prevalence and nature of violence against women across Canada.

This *Juristat* article is organized into four sections:

- Prevalence and severity of violence against women;
- Risk factors associated with violence against women;
- Impact of violence against women; and,
- Responses to violence against women.

1) Prevalence and severity of violence against women

This analysis tracks trends in violence against women over time, providing an indicator of whether the situation of violence against women has improved or worsened in Canada. In addition to profiling the nature and extent of all forms of violence against women, this section will also examine specific forms of violence where women are predominantly the victim, highlighting the gendered dimension of the issue of violence against women. These forms of violence include intimate partner violence, sexual assault and criminal harassment (stalking). Both police-reported and self-reported victimization data are used.

2) Risk factors associated with violence against women

Through mainly descriptive analysis of the socio-demographic, lifestyle, and community factors linked to violence against women, this section will help shed light on the particular subgroups and situations of women most at-risk of violence. The primary source of information comes from self-reported victimization data, with some analysis using police-reported data.

3) Impact of violence against women

The impact of violence against women extends beyond the immediate physical consequences to women and can include long-term physical and mental health repercussions on the victim, as well as consequences on the family and larger society. This section explores these impacts in detail, using primarily self-reported data on victimization.

4) Responses to violence against women

This section will examine the multiple levels of response to the issue of violence against women, including the involvement of police, the use and availability of social supports for women, and the response to the accused. A range of data sources are employed.

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Highlights

Section 1

Prevalence and severity of violence against women

Police-reported violence against women

- According to police-reported data, about 173,600 women aged 15 years and older were victims of violent crime in 2011. This translates into a rate of 1,207 female victims for every 100,000 women in the population, slightly higher than the rate for men (1,151).
- Some forms of violence against women have decreased in recent years. Data from the Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting trend file show a decrease in police-reported attempted murders and physical assaults against women between 2009 and 2011. However, the rate of police-reported sexual assaults against women increased in 2010 and remained stable in 2011. Following nearly three decades of decline, the rate of homicide against women has been relatively stable over the past decade, according to data from the Homicide Survey.
- In 2011, the five most common violent offences committed against women were common assault (49%), uttering threats (13%), serious assault (10%), sexual assault level I (7%), and criminal harassment (7%). With the exception of sexual assault and criminal harassment, these were also the most frequently occurring offences against men. Women were eleven times more likely than men to be a victim of sexual offences and three times as likely to be the victim of criminal harassment (stalking).
- Overall, men were responsible for 83% of police-reported violence committed against women. Most commonly, the accused was the woman's intimate partner (includes both spousal and dating) (45%), followed by acquaintances or friends (27%), strangers (16%) and non-spousal family members (12%). This contrasts violent crimes against men, where intimate partners were among the least common perpetrators (12%).
- Intimate partner violence, which was nearly four times higher for women, was characterized by physical assaults and the use of physical force rather than weapons. About half (51%) of female victims of intimate partner violence suffered some type of injury.

Self-reported violence against women

- According to victimization data, rates of self-reported violent victimization against women have been stable between 1999 and 2009. Among the three types of violent victimization measured by the General Social Survey (GSS) on victimization, robbery was the only type against women to have increased since 1999.
- While women and men self-report similar rates of spousal violence, women's experiences are different from men. Women are more likely than men to experience the most severe forms of self-reported spousal victimization, such as multiple victimizations and incidents with physical injuries.
- When examining self-reported spousal violence, there has been a significant decline in spousal violence against women since 1999, mainly attributable to a decrease in violence involving previous spouses.

Section 2

Risk factors of violence against women

- Based on both police-reported and self-reported victimization data, being young was a consistent risk factor for violence against women. According to these data, risk of violence decreases with increasing age.
- Data from the Homicide Survey indicate that Aboriginal women were disproportionally represented as homicide victims. Similarly, victimization data indicate that Aboriginal women have higher rates of self-reported spousal and non-spousal violence.
- Victimization data also suggest that certain factors are associated with the risk of violent victimization for women, even when other factors are taken into account. For spousal violence, these factors include being young, having an activity limitation and being emotionally and/or financially abused by a spouse.
- Women most at risk of non-spousal violence included those who were young, participated in many evening activities, were single, used drugs, identified as an Aboriginal person and lived in a community with social disorder, such as vandalism, noisy neighbours, and people using or dealing drugs.

Section 3

Impacts of violence against women

- Women generally have higher levels of fear of crime compared to men. According to victimization data, this fear was heightened when women had been the victim of non-spousal violence.
- Daily stress levels were elevated when women had reported being violently victimized in the preceding 12 months. Over half (53%) of women victimized by a spouse stated that most of their days were "quite a bit or extremely stressful", significantly higher than the proportion of women victimized by someone else (41%) and the proportion of women not victimized (23%).
- More than one-quarter of spousal victims (27%) and non-spousal victims (26%) used medication to cope with depression, to calm them down or to help them sleep. This was significantly higher than the proportion of women who were not violently victimized (18%).
- Emotional impacts of violent victimization were more pronounced for women than men. Female victims of spousal violence were seven times more likely as male spousal victims to be fearful (27% versus 4%^{E, 1}), three times as likely to be depressed or anxious (23% versus 7%^E), and twice as likely to be angry (35% versus 18%). These reactions to spousal violence generally parallel those for non-spousal violence.
- Female victims of spousal violence were twice as likely as male victims to be physically injured, three times as likely to experience disruptions to their daily lives, and almost seven times as likely to fear for their life. These gender differences were not evident for non-spousal violence, with the exception of finding it difficult or impossible to carry out everyday activities.

Section 4

Responses to violence against women

- According to victimization data, less than one-third (30%) of female victims of spousal violence stated that the incident came to the attention of police, down from 36% in 2004. No change was recorded in the levels of reporting to police for non-spousal violence against women (28%).
- The increased seriousness or severity of violence heightens the likelihood of police involvement for spousal violence incidents against women. Reporting to police was higher among those female spousal victims who sustained physical injury, who feared for their lives and who suffered the greatest number of spousal violence incidents.
- Certain types of spousal violence were more likely to come to the attention of police, including incidents where the woman was sexually assaulted (53%) or beaten, choked or had a weapon used against them (60%). By contrast, sexual assaults perpetrated by someone other than a spouse were least likely to come to the attention of police. Nine in ten non-spousal sexual assaults were never reported to police.
- According to police-reported data, 76% of violent incidents against women reported to and substantiated by police were solved. Of these, about seven in ten (71%) resulted in a charge being laid or recommended. Spousal and dating violence against women were most likely to result in criminal charges (84% and 83%), followed by stranger perpetrated violence (73%).
- Women also turned to other sources of support beyond police. According to the Transition Home Survey (THS), there were 4,645 women residing in shelters across Canada on the snapshot day (April 15th, 2010), most of whom were escaping abuse (71%).

Note

1. This *Juristat* uses the coefficient of variation (CV) as a measure of the sampling error. An estimate that has a CV between 16.6% and 33.3% should be used with caution and the symbol ^{†E} is referenced with the estimate.

Section 1: Prevalence and severity of violence against women

By Maire Sinha

Quantifying the problem of violence against women—estimating the number of women violently victimized in the population—can be challenging for two main reasons. First, the possibility of undercounting can exist regardless of the survey instrument used. This is because women may be reluctant to disclose their victimization to anyone, including authorities or survey interviewers.

Second, estimates of the prevalence of violence can vary depending on the survey, given the differences in the way administrative and population-based surveys measure the amount of crime or victimization. Police-reported administrative surveys record all *Criminal Code* offences, both non-violent and violent, but only capture those crimes that come to the attention of police.

In comparison, population-based surveys, namely self-reported victimization surveys, record information on crimes regardless of whether they are reported to and substantiated by police. They do not, however, collect information for all crimes. The General Social Survey (GSS) on Victimization, collected every five years, is limited to eight offences in total, three of which are violent including physical assault, sexual assault, and robbery, with a special module on spousal violence and a question on stalking. By comparison, the police-reported Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Survey captures all *Criminal Code* violent offences, categorized into over 50 categories.

Recognizing the benefits and limitations of these data sources, this analysis draws on data from both complementary surveys to assess the nature and extent of violence against women. Due to the divergent methodologies between surveys, comparisons should be made cautiously (see Survey descriptions section for a detailed description of these surveys).

This section first examines the overall prevalence, trends and regional variations in violence against women aged 15 years and older, including all forms of violent crimes directed at women. Similar to the 2006 edition of *Measuring Violence Against Women*, the analysis then focuses on the extent and severity of specific forms of gender-based violence, including intimate partner violence, sexual violations and criminal harassment.

Overall prevalence of violence against women

Police-reported violence against women

Women at slightly higher risk of being violently victimized than men

According to police-reported data, about 173,600 women aged 15 years and older were victims of violent crime in 2011. This translates into a rate of 1,207 female victims for every 100,000 women in the population, 5% higher than the rate of violence against men (1,151 per 100,000) (Table 1.1).

Overall, women and men tend to be victims of similar offences. The five most common violent offences committed against women were common assault (49%), uttering threats (13%), serious assault¹ (10%), sexual assault level 1 – the least serious form of sexual assault (7%), and criminal harassment (7%). For men, the most frequently occurring offences were common assault (42%), serious assault (19%), uttering threats (16%), robbery (10%), and other assaults (5%). The main differences were that women were more likely than men to be victims of a sexual offence, while men were more likely to be robbed.

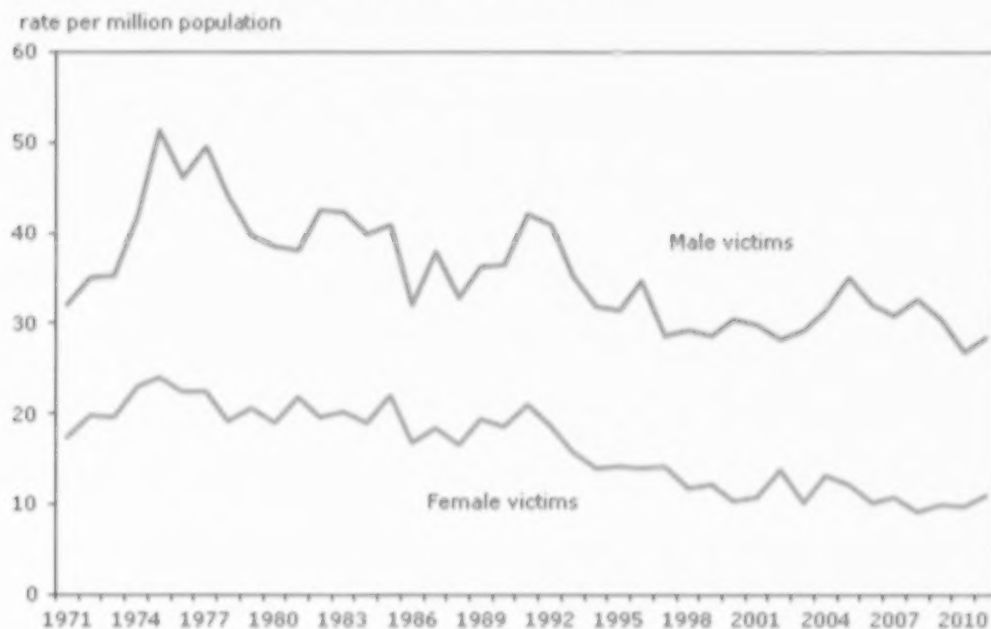
For certain offences, women had a much higher rate of police-reported violence than men. Women were eleven times more likely than men to be sexually victimized, three times as likely to be stalked (criminally harassed), and twice as likely to be the victim of indecent and harassing phone calls. However, for some violent crimes, women had a lower risk than men. These offences included homicide, attempted murder, serious physical assault, robbery and uttering threats.

Homicides against women stable over the past decade

Over the course of the past three decades, communities and governments have invested resources with the goal to reduce the prevalence of violence against women (Federal-Provincial-Territorial Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women 2002). While monitoring trends in violence against women cannot indicate whether interventions have been effective, examining prevalence over time can help to inform the development and evaluation of initiatives. One approach to assessing trends in violence against women is to examine changes in the prevalence of homicide. This is because homicide is generally considered a strong barometer of violent crime in general, as they are more likely than other violent crimes to be reported to police and are typically the subject of exhaustive police investigation (Nivette 2011, Van Dijk 2008).

When examining homicides of women, the overall rate decreased sharply between the mid-1970s and 2000, dropping 58% (Chart 1.1). However, over the past decade, the rate of homicide against women has remained relatively stable, despite annual fluctuations. These data include those incidents where homicides have been confirmed and recorded by police and do not include unconfirmed reports, such as in the case of missing women. Some possible explanations behind the decrease in the 1980s and 1990s have included improvements in women's socio-economic status, combined with the growth and availability of resources for victims (Dawson et al. 2009).

Chart 1.1
Rate of homicides, by sex of victim, 1971 to 2011



Note: Includes homicides (excluding other violations causing death) of those aged 15 years and older. Excludes homicides where the victim's sex and age was unknown.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.

In comparison, homicide rates against men, which have been historically higher than rates against women, have been generally stable since the late 1990s. While homicides against men increased in 2011, the rate increase was less pronounced than the rate increase for women (+6% versus +16%).

Police-reported rates of physical assault down, while rates of sexual assault stable

There is some indication that other forms of violence against women have decreased in recent years.² Data from the Incident-based UCR trend file, representing 99% of the population, show a decrease in attempted murders and physical assaults³ against women between 2009 and 2011 (Table 1.2). Decreases were also recorded for attempted murders and physical assaults against men, though the decreases for men were more pronounced.

One offence that has not decreased in recent years is sexual assault. The rate of police-reported sexual assaults against women increased in 2010 and remained stable in 2011. While also seeing an increase in 2010, the rate of police-reported sexual assaults against men in 2011 decreased. It is noteworthy that a significant proportion of sexual assaults do not come to the attention of police (for full discussion, see Section 4).

Text box 1.1

Police-reported hate crimes directed at women

In some instances, women can be targeted solely because of their gender. The most notable Canadian example is the 1989 killing of 14 female students in Montreal, which was motivated by the male perpetrator's general hatred of women. This act led to the creation of the "National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women", honouring these victims and all victims of violence against women (Status of Women Canada n.d.).

Offences can be considered hate crimes if the incident is motivated by hatred towards a particular group based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation or other similar factors. In 2010, there were seven crimes where police determined that hatred of the person's sex was the primary motive for the offence. Of these, three were violent, three were non-violent and one was unknown.⁵

Besides being targeted solely for being a woman, women can also be targeted because of their racial or ethnic background, religion, sexual orientation or other characteristic. In 2010, women represented one-quarter of victims of all hate crimes in Canada. Their representation as victims varied by motive. In particular, women accounted for 32% of victims in incidents motivated by religion, 29% by race or ethnicity and 16% by sexual orientation.

Provincial rates of police-reported violence against women highest in Saskatchewan and Manitoba

In all provinces and territories except Nova Scotia and British Columbia, the police-reported rate of violence against women in 2011 was either equal to or higher than violence directed at men (Table 1.3). The rate of police-reported violence against women was 5% lower than the rate for men in Nova Scotia and 8% lower in British Columbia.

Provincially, the prevalence of violence against women generally reflects regional variations in overall violent crime. Saskatchewan and Manitoba, which have consistently recorded the highest provincial rates of police-reported violent crime, had rates of violence against women in 2011 that were about double the national rate. The central provinces of Ontario and Quebec had the lowest rates of police-reported violence against women.

As with violent crime overall, the territories have consistently recorded the highest rates of police-reported violence against women in the country. The same was true in 2011. The rate of violent crime against women in Nunavut was nearly 13 times higher than the rate for Canada (Table 1.3). Similarly, the rate in the Northwest Territories was nine times higher than average, while Yukon's rate was the lowest among the territories, with a rate that was four times the national average.

Earlier research has suggested that differences in the demographic characteristics of territorial residents may help explain women's increased risk of violence (Johnson 2006). According to the 2011 Census, the population in the territories was significantly younger on average, a consistent risk factor for victimization. Further, those living in the territories are also more likely to have other socio-demographic factors, as collected by the 2006 Census, associated with victimization, including identifying as Aboriginal, being single and having less than a high school education. For full discussion of risk factors associated with victimization, see the section on risk factors for violence against women.

Police-reported violence against women most prevalent in Thunder Bay

Among census metropolitan areas (CMA),⁶ rates of violence against women follow a similar pattern as violence in the overall population. In 2011, Thunder Bay and Saskatoon recorded rates that were nearly double the average among CMAs (Table 1.4). Saint John and Regina had the next highest rates of violence against women. The CMAs with the lowest prevalence rates were all situated in Ontario and Quebec.

Among the three largest CMAs, Vancouver recorded the highest rate of violence against women. While lower than the national average, its rate was 5% higher than Montreal and 21% higher than Toronto.

Intimate partners most common perpetrators of police-reported violence against women

In general, the nature of violence against women is distinctly different from violence directed at men. In 2011, intimate partners, including spouses and dating partners, were the most common perpetrators in violent crime against women (Chart 1.2). They represented 45% of all those accused of victimizing women, followed by acquaintances or friends (27%), strangers (16%) and non-spousal family members (12%). This contrasts violent crimes against men, where intimate partners were among the least common perpetrators (12%) and where strangers and friends or acquaintances were the most common (39% and 40%, respectively).

Chart 1.2

Victims of police-reported violent crimes, by sex of victim and accused-victim relationship, 2011



1. Intimate partner includes spousal and dating partners.

Note: Includes victims aged 15 years and older. Excludes victims with unknown sex and/or age.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

Reflecting these gendered patterns in the types of violent perpetrators, more than two-thirds of violent incidents (69%) against women were committed in private residences, such as the victim and/or offender's home. This compares to 44% of violent incidents against men.

The majority of perpetrators of police-reported violence against women were men. Overall, men were responsible for 83% of violence committed against women, with women accounting for the remaining 17%. The share of violence committed by men differed by the accused person's relationship with the female victim. Male accused accounted for 60% of violence committed by friends or acquaintances, 68% of non-spousal family violence, 74% of stranger violence and 98% of intimate partner violence. The over-representation of men as accused was also evident for violence directed at men, with male accused representing 76% of all perpetrators.

Text box 1.2

Police-reported violence against girls under the age of 12

It is recognized that violence against females can start before girls ever reach adolescence. In some countries, the preference of parents for boys over girls has resulted in a high rate of female infant mortality, while the infliction of injury under the guise of traditional customs, notably female genital mutilation, has resulted in life-long harm for girls and women (Adam et al. 2010). In Canada, as in other countries, violence against girls under 12 is often perpetrated in the home by family members. This is because young girls are dependent on adults, primarily their parents, for their daily needs (Boudreaux and Lord 2005).

Using police-reported data, it is possible to examine the prevalence and severity of violence against girls, though it is noteworthy that incidents of victimization against young children, particularly the very young, are less often reported to police (Ogrodnik 2010).⁷ Young children are either not developmentally capable of contacting police or have limited contact with those outside the home.

In 2011, approximately 8,200 girls under the age of 12 were victims of violent crime, representing half of all child victims of violent crime. The rate of 381 girl victims per 100,000 population was similar to the rate for boys (375 per 100,000 population), and was 83% lower than the rate among female youth (aged 12 to 17) and 67% lower than the rate for adult women.

Just over half of the violent crimes against girls were committed by a family member (56%), including a parent (biological, adoptive, step and foster parent), sibling, uncle, aunt or other extended family member. Just under one-quarter (23%) were perpetrated by a casual acquaintance,⁸ 10% by a stranger, 5% by a friend and 5% by an authority figure.

As with most crimes, males were most often identified as the perpetrator of violence against girls (79%). However, not all male perpetrators of violence against girls were adult men, as one-third (30%) of male accused were under the age of 18 years. Overall, male accused represented 85% of stranger-perpetrated violence, 80% of family violence, and 77% of offences committed by acquaintances or friends.

Sexual crimes were by far the most common offence against girls. In particular, 47% of all violent crimes against girls under 12 reported to police were sexual in nature, much higher than the corresponding share of violent crimes against women⁹ (7%). Level 1 sexual assaults accounted for the majority of sexual offences against girls (69%), followed by child-specific sexual offences (28%), such as sexual interference, invitation to sexual touching, and luring a child via a computer.

Homicide was most commonly committed against infant girls¹⁰ than older aged girls and women. Between 2001 and 2011, there were 26 female infants killed per million population. This elevated risk during infancy was similar to the risk to infant boys (36 infant boys per million).

Over the previous three years, the rate of police-reported physical assaults against girls has remained relatively stable. Unlike trends for older females, the rate of sexual assaults against girls, including levels 1, 2 and 3, has decreased over the past three years and was 6% lower in 2011 than in 2009. A similar drop was recorded for boys. These trends in sexual assault do not include child-specific sexual offences, such as luring a child over the Internet and invitation to sexual touching, which have generally increased in recent years (Brennan 2012).

Provincially, police-reported rates of violence against girls under the age of 12 were highest in Saskatchewan (791 per 100,000 population) and Manitoba (622) and lowest in Ontario (301) and Prince Edward Island (290). This is in keeping with regional variations in violence against women and for the general population. Somewhat contrasting general regional patterns was the Yukon. While the territories historically have higher violent crime rates, the rate in the Yukon (633) was well below the other territories and was lower than Saskatchewan.

Despite being outside the provinces with the highest rates of violence against girls, prevalence rates were highest in Moncton (663) and Saint John (651). The two lowest rates of violence against girls were found in Ottawa (178) and Calgary (205).

Text box 1.3

Police-reported violence against teenage girls aged 12 to 17 years

When children approach and enter their teen years, they can face new and different types of risk of violent victimization. In particular, with the broadening of activities, contacts, and independence from their families, their risk of victimization from individuals outside the family, such as dating partners grows (Pinheiro 2006, Beattie 2005).

According to police-reported data, there were nearly 27,000 female youth between the ages of 12 and 17 years who were violently victimized in 2011. The rate of 2,273 female youth victims per 100,000 population was nearly six times higher than the rate for younger aged girls (under the age of 12), and almost twice as high as the rate for adult women (aged 18 and older).

The rate of physical assaults against female youth has decreased over the past three years, with a rate in 2011 that was 6% lower than in 2009. A greater decrease was recorded in the physical assault rate against male youth (-14%).

Trends in sexual assault follow a somewhat different pattern. The rate of sexual assaults against female youth dropped 4% in 2011, after increasing in 2010. This was similar to trends in sexual assaults against male youth.

In 2011, the rate of violence against female youth was 8% higher than the rate for male youth, which can be partly attributed to girls' higher risk of sexual violence. More specifically, female youth were eight times as likely as male youth to be a victim of sexual assault or another type of sexual offence (649 victims per 100,000 versus 81 per 100,000).

While their risk of sexual violence was elevated, sexual violations were not the most common form of victimization against female youth, diverging from patterns in violence against younger aged girls. Physical assault accounted for 47% of all violent crimes perpetrated against female youth, followed by sexual offences (29%), uttering threats (11%) and criminal harassment (5%).

Also, by the time girls approach and reach adolescence, casual acquaintances replace family members as the type of perpetrator most often responsible for violence (34% versus 24%). These perpetrators were most often female peers, as 39% of violence perpetrated by casual acquaintances involved female accused under the age of 18.

Rates of violence against teenage girls tend to follow the same regional patterns as violent crime patterns overall and against women. Among the provinces, female youth were most at risk in Saskatchewan and Manitoba, where rates were about double the national average (4,834 and 3,982 per 100,000 population, respectively). The central provinces of Ontario and Quebec had the lowest police-reported rates of violence against teenage girls (1,813 and 1,960 per 100,000 population). All three territories had rates higher than those recorded in the provinces.

Self-reported victimization against women

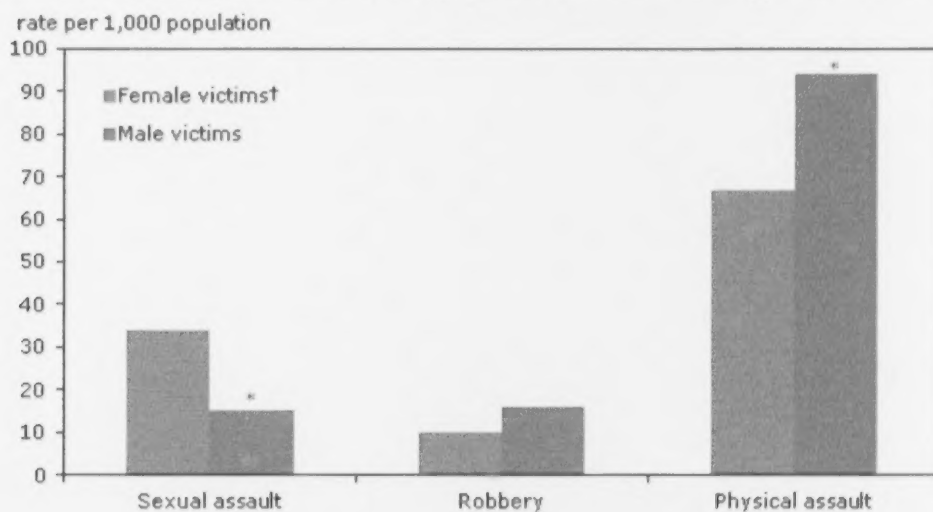
Victimization against women remains stable

When considering self-reported violent victimization, which includes both violent incidents reported to and not reported to police, there has been no change in the prevalence of violence against women over the past five years and within the previous decade. According to victimization data from the GSS conducted in 1999, 2004 and 2009, the rate of violent victimization against women aged 15 years and over has remained relatively stable between 1999 and 2009 (Table 1.5). In 2009, there were nearly 1.6 million self-reported violent incidents¹¹ committed against women in the previous 12 months, a rate of 112 incidents per 1,000 women. This rate was comparable to that for men.

However, as is the case with police-reported data, the risk and trends of certain types of victimization vary between women and men. Women were more than twice as likely as men to report being a victim of sexual assault (34 incidents per 1,000 versus 15[†] per 1,000) (Chart 1.3). This gender difference has narrowed in recent years due to the stability in rates of sexual assault against women, combined with a significant increase in the rate of self-reported sexual assaults against men since 2004.

Chart 1.3

Self-reported violent victimization, by sex of victim and type of victimization, 2009



† reference category

* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

Note: Data from the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut were collected using a different methodology and are therefore excluded.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2009.

Another significant change over the ten-year period relates to women's increased risk of robbery. Whereas in the past, the risk of robbery was heightened for men, women are now at equal risk as men of becoming a victim of robbery.

Physical assault was the one victimization type where women had a lower risk than men, a finding consistent over time. There has been no change in women's risk of physical assault since 1999, a trend similar to men.

Rates of self-reported violent victimization against women similar across the provinces

Victimization data indicate that the 2009 rates of self-reported violent victimization against women were similar across the provinces (Table 1.6). This pattern is in keeping with those for self-reported violent victimization against men, with the exception of Quebec where rates against men were significantly lower than the national average.

Self-reported victimization data on violence against women were available for four of the six largest census metropolitan areas (CMAs), namely Toronto, Montreal, Calgary and Edmonton.¹² Among these CMAs, only Toronto had a rate of self-reported violent victimization against women that was significantly different from the national average, with a rate that was 45% lower than the rate for Canada.

Women more likely to know the perpetrator

Similar to police-reported findings, victimization data suggest that women were more likely than men to know the perpetrator. For instance, 62% of female victims of non-spousal violence knew their assailant. The reverse was true for male victims, where strangers accounted for the largest share of perpetrators (55%). The vast majority of perpetrators (91%) of self-reported non-spousal violence against women were men.

Text box 1.4

Self-reported violence against women in the territories

In recent years, a number of enhancements have been made to the collection of self-reported victimization data in the territories. For the first time in 2004, as part of a pilot test, the GSS collected and released self-reported victimization information via telephone from Canadians living in the three territories. Data collection was repeated with the 2009 GSS using both telephone and face-to-face interviews. In 2009, self-reported victimization data for the territories were collected using a slightly different sampling and collection methodology. Therefore, direct comparisons between the provinces and territories should be avoided.

Results from the 2009 GSS indicate that women living in the territories had rates of violent victimization similar to men. In total, there were 6,445^E self-reported violent incidents against women, representing a rate of 178^E per 1,000 population aged 15 years and older.

A similarity in prevalence between women and men was also seen for spousal violence, with 10% of the territorial population aged 15 years and older with a current or former spouse reporting spousal victimization. However, the forms of spousal violence directed at women were more severe. In particular, women represented 78% of spousal victims who were beaten, choked, sexually assaulted or had a weapon used against them. Women were also more likely to fear for their lives as a result of the victimization (Perreault and Hotton Mahony 2012).

Text box 1.5

Violence against Aboriginal women

Demographically, Aboriginal women differ in important ways from non-Aboriginal women. Population data suggest that the female Aboriginal population is growing at a faster pace than the female non-Aboriginal population and that this population is generally younger, more likely to be unmarried, and experience higher levels of unemployment (O'Donnell and Wallace 2011). In addition to demographic differences, the Standing Committee on the Status of Women (2011) has identified other larger socio-economic issues affecting Aboriginal people, such as economic and social inequalities, possible loss of understanding of history and culture and residential school experiences. Overall, it has been consistently found that Aboriginal women have a higher likelihood of being victimized compared to the rest of the female population (Brennan 2011, Perreault 2011).

According to the 2009 GSS, the rate of self-reported violent victimization against Aboriginal women¹³ in the provinces was about 2.5 times higher than the rate for non-Aboriginal women (279 versus 106 per 1,000 population). This was the case for spousal violence, as well as violence perpetrated by other family members, friends, acquaintances and strangers.

In some instances, the severity of violence also differed between Aboriginal women and their non-Aboriginal counterparts. For self-reported spousal violence, injury was more prevalent among Aboriginal female victims. Nearly 6 in 10 (59%) Aboriginal female spousal violence victims reported injury, while about 4 in 10 non-Aboriginal female victims were injured (41%).

Aboriginal female victims were also more likely to indicate that they feared for their lives as a result of spousal violence (52%^E versus 31% of non-Aboriginal female victims). The higher likelihood of injury and fear among Aboriginal female victims may be partly related to the nature of spousal violence, as Aboriginal women often reported the most severe forms of violence, including being sexually assaulted, beaten, choked, or threatened with a gun or a knife (Brennan 2011). In contrast to spousal violence, the occurrence of injury was similar between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women among incidents of self-reported non-spousal violence.

Violence against Aboriginal women can take many forms, the most serious of which is homicide. The issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Canada has been identified at both the national and international levels (Department of Justice Canada 2010). However, quantifying the prevalence of this problem is difficult, since official statistics from the Homicide Survey only record homicides that have been confirmed and recorded by police and do not include unconfirmed reports, such as in the case of missing women.

Also, while it is possible to examine police-reported homicides of Aboriginal women, it is noteworthy that in half of all homicides (50%), the Aboriginal identity¹⁴ of the homicide victims was unknown.¹⁵ Between 2001 and 2011, at least 8% of all murdered women aged 15 years and older were Aboriginal, double their representation in the Canadian population¹⁶ (4%).

Specific forms of gender-based violence

The following analysis explores specific types of gender-based violence, which are typically perpetrated by men against women. These include intimate partner violence, sexual violence, and criminal harassment (i.e., stalking). In particular, both the extent and severity of intimate partner violence is explored using police-reported and self-reported victimization data. Previous research has shown that intimate partner violence differs in both frequency and severity from other forms of violence (Sinha 2012, Wathen and MacMillian 2003). Next, using police and victimization survey data, the prevalence and severity of sexual violations and criminal harassment are examined.

Intimate partner violence

Intimate partner violence— violence committed by legally married, separated, divorced, opposite and same sex common-law, dating partners (current and previous) and other intimate partners —has been consistently identified as one of the most common forms of violence against women, both nationally and internationally (Sinha 2012, Johnson and Dawson 2011, WHO 2002). Intimate partner violence can encompass a range of abusive behaviours from verbal and emotional abuse to sexual violence, physical assaults and homicides. However, in this section, violence committed by intimate partners is examined using police-reported and victimization data, which are based on *Criminal Code* definitions. While both police-reported and victimization data are used to examine trends and characteristics in intimate partner violence, victimization data are limited to spousal violence, as the GSS contains a special module dedicated to spousal violence and only captures incidents of dating violence within the general victimization component of the survey.

Police-reported intimate partner violence

Women have higher rates of intimate partner violence than men

In 2011, 8 in 10 victims of police-reported intimate partner violence were women. Overall, there were about 78,000 female victims of intimate partner violence, representing a rate of 542 victims per 100,000 women aged 15 years and older. This compares to a rate of 139 male victims per 100,000 population.

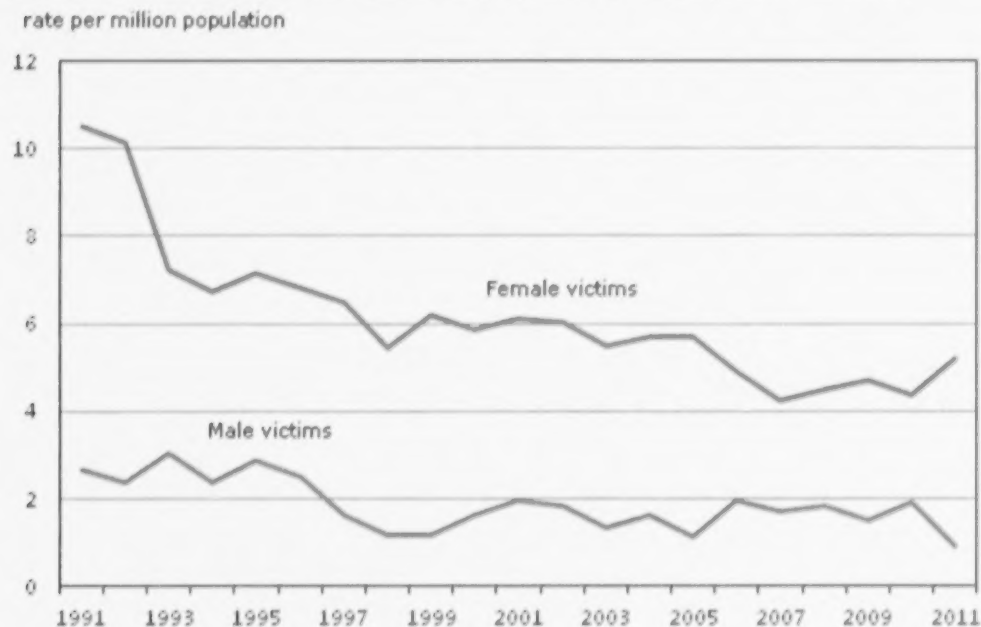
Women's increased risk of police-reported intimate partner violence was evident for both spousal and dating violence. They were almost four times more likely than men to be victims of both spousal violence and dating violence.

Both women and men were more at risk of violence from dating partners than spouses. In 2011, at least 631 women per 100,000 unmarried population were victims of dating violence, 60% higher than the spousal violence rate (395 women per 100,000 ever married population).¹⁷

Rate of intimate partner homicide has decreased

As was the case for violence overall, trends in intimate partner homicide can be an indicator of changes in the prevalence of intimate partner violence. Despite a 19% increase between 2010 and 2011, the rate of intimate partner homicides against women in 2011 was 51% lower than twenty years earlier and 15% lower than ten years ago (Chart 1.4). This overall decline in intimate partner homicides committed against women was driven by both spousal and dating homicides. Between 1991 and 2011, the rate of homicides against female spouses dropped 46%, while the rate of dating homicides against women fell by 65%.

Chart 1.4
Victims of intimate partner homicide, by sex of victim, 1991 to 2011



Note: Rates are calculated on the basis of 1,000,000 population. Population based upon July 1st estimates from Statistics Canada, Demography Division. Intimate partners include legally married, separated, divorced, common-law, and dating partners (current and previous). A small number of homicides of dating partners under 15 years of age were excluded in rate calculations. Data on homicides between dating partners are not available prior to 1991. The Homicide Survey was revised and expanded in 1991 in an effort to respond to changing information needs. Excludes homicides where the age and/or sex of the victim was unknown.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.

Decreases have also been recorded for attempted murder and physical assault of female intimate partners, according to police-reported trend data for the years 2009 to 2011. In contrast to these decreases, the rate of sexual assaults against female intimate partners has increased. In 2011, women were 11% more likely to be the victim of police-reported sexual assault by an intimate partner than in 2009.

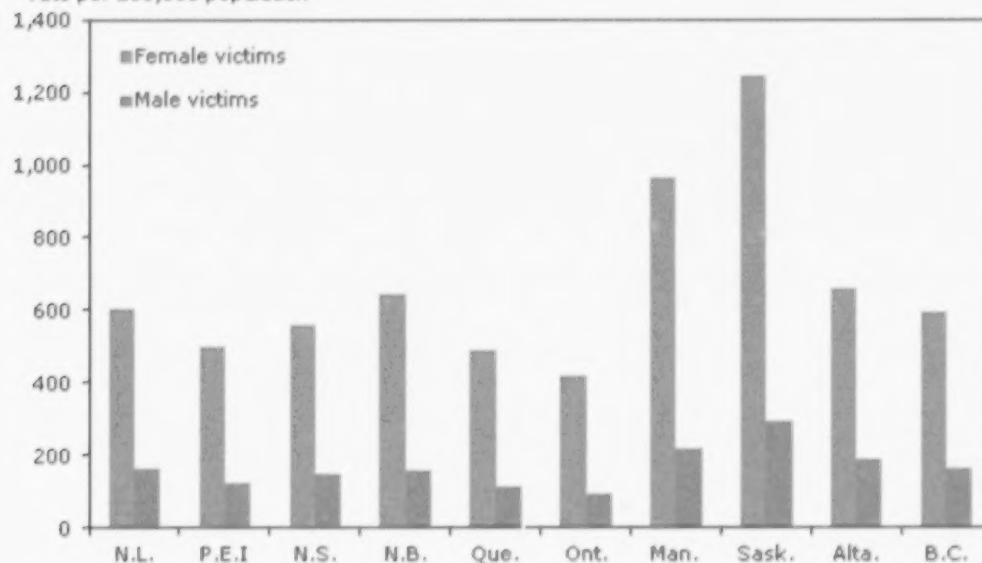
Manitoba and Saskatchewan record highest provincial rates of intimate partner violence

Given that a large share of violence against women is committed by intimate partners, it is not unexpected that regional variations in intimate partner violence are similar to overall violence against women. Among the provinces, the highest rate of intimate partner violence against women was reported in Saskatchewan, followed by Manitoba (Chart 1.5). The rates in these provinces were more than double those in Ontario and Quebec, the provinces with the lowest rates.

Chart 1.5

Victims of police-reported intimate partner violence, by sex of victim and province, 2011

rate per 100,000 population



Note: Intimate partner violence refers to violence committed by legally married, separated, divorced, opposite and same sex common-law, dating partners (current and previous) and other intimate partners. Intimate partner category includes victims aged 15 to 89. Excludes incidents where the sex and/or age of the victim was unknown. Rates are calculated on the basis of 100,000 population.

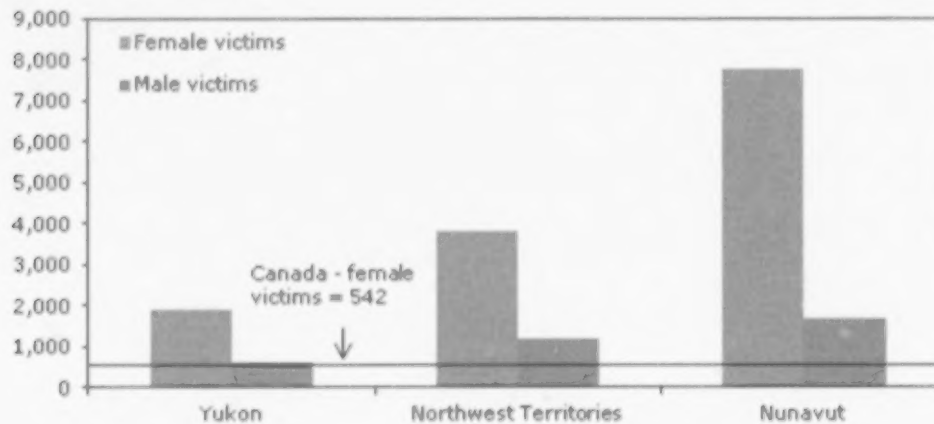
Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

As is the case for most crimes, rates of intimate partner violence in the territories were considerably higher than any of the provinces (Chart 1.6). Nunavut recorded the highest territorial rate of intimate partner violence against women, at 7,772 female intimate partner violence victims per 100,000 population. This rate was four times higher than Yukon's rate (1,900) and double the rate recorded for the Northwest Territories (3,818).

Chart 1.6

Victims of police-reported intimate partner violence, by sex of victim and territory, 2011

rate per 100,000 population



Note: Intimate partner violence refers to violence committed by legally married, separated, divorced, opposite and same sex common-law, dating partners (current and previous) and other intimate partners. Intimate partner category includes victims aged 15 to 89. Excludes incidents where the sex and/or age of the victim was unknown. Rates are calculated on the basis of 100,000 population.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

Thunder Bay records highest rate of intimate partner violence among CMAs

At the census metropolitan level, findings generally mirrored those from previous years. Based on police reported data, Thunder Bay recorded the highest rate of intimate partner violence against women (Table 1.7). This was followed by Regina and Saskatoon reporting the second and third highest rates.

All CMAs had rates of intimate partner violence that were consistently higher for women than men. However, the difference in risk varied. The highest ratio of female victims to male victims was recorded in the CMAs of Barrie, Abbotsford–Mission, St. Catharines–Niagara and Sherbrooke with ratios of 6 to 1. This means that, for every six female victims of intimate partner violence, there was one male victim. Among the CMAs with the lowest female to male victims of intimate partner violence were Victoria, Kelowna, Brantford, St. John's and Moncton, all of which had a ratio of three female victims to one male victim.

Physical assault most common form of intimate partner violence

Based on police-reported data, women victimized by their intimate partners were most often (73%) the victim of physical assault (Table 1.8). While in most instances (60%), these assaults were the least serious of the three levels of assault, 11% of these assaults were either aggravated assaults or assaults with a weapon. Physical assaults were also the most common form of violence involving male intimate partner victims. Intimate partner violence against women, however, was more likely than violence against men to involve sexual offences (3% versus less than 1%) and criminal harassment (8% versus 4%).

In 2011, about half (51%) of female victims of intimate partner violence suffered some type of injury, slightly lower than the percentage of men (55%). While some differences existed by specific offence type, the overall disparity between sexes, albeit small, is largely a reflection of gender differences in the most frequently occurring offences. A greater proportion of offences against women than men involved non-physical contact, such as criminal harassment. A small proportion (2%) of injuries to women resulted in the need for professional medical attention or hospitalization.

Majority of intimate partner violence against women did not involve weapons

Physical force was used against 48% of female victims of intimate partner violence, higher than the proportion for male victims (42%). Another 3% of female victims had a weapon used against them, most often knives/cutting instruments and other non-firearm weapons. In comparison, intimate partner incidents involving male victims were twice as likely to involve weapons. One explanation for these gender differences may be attributed to differences in physical strength between men and women and the corresponding reliance of female accused on weapons (Busch and Rosenberg 2004).

Six in ten spousal homicides against women had a history of family violence

One indicator of severity of intimate partner violence is the recurrent and ongoing nature of this violence. The Homicide Survey captures information on the history of family violence between the victim and accused, though it does not indicate whether the accused or the victim was the perpetrator of the prior violence, or whether the violence was previously committed by both parties against each other.¹⁸

Between 2001 and 2011, police reported that about six in ten spousal homicides of women (59%)¹⁹ had a history of family violence involving the victim and accused. This was lower than the proportion of spousal homicides against men with a history of family violence (78%).

In some homicides, the victim was the first to use or threaten to use violence.²⁰ According to police investigation, female victims were far less likely than male victims to be the first to use or threaten force. Six percent of female intimate partner violence victims initiated the violence that ended in their death, compared to 29% of male victims. Female spousal victims were as likely as dating partner victims to be the first to use or threaten violence (7% versus 5%). This finding contrasts homicides involving male victims, where spousal victims were twice as likely as dating victims to be the initiator of the violence that culminated in their death (36% versus 15%).

Self-reported spousal violence

Rates of self-reported spousal violence against women stable

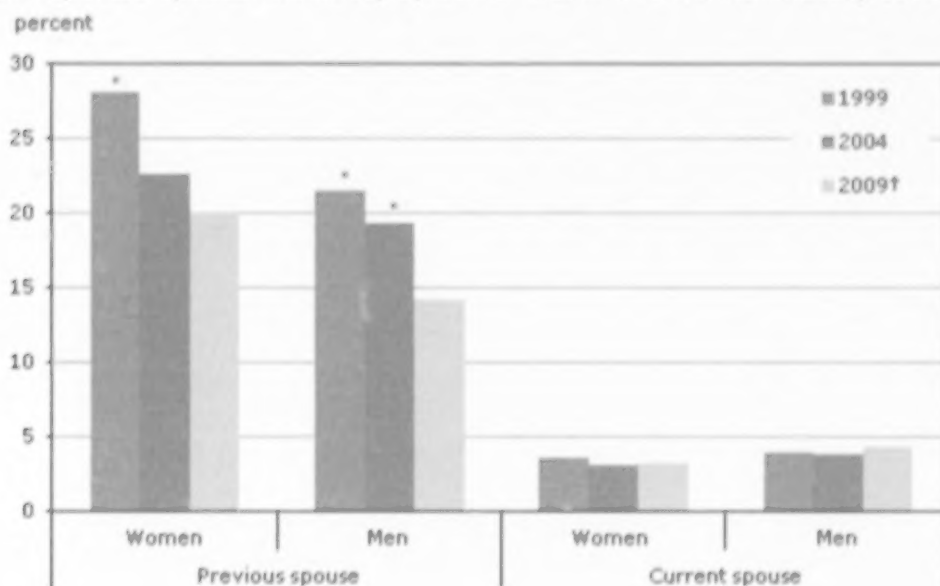
Using the General Social Survey, it is possible to examine the prevalence and severity of one form of intimate partner violence—spousal violence.²¹ According to the 2009 GSS, 6% of Canadian women currently or previously living in a spousal relationship experienced spousal violence in the previous five years, similar to rates reported for men (Table 1.9). This represented an estimated 601,000 women and 585,000 men that were either physically or sexually victimized by a legally married or common-law spouse (current or former).

While there was no significant change in the proportion of women who experienced spousal violence between 2004 and 2009, there was a statistically significant decline between 1999 (8%) and 2009 (6%). This decline was not present for spousal violence against men, where there was no significant change over time.

The decrease in spousal violence against women over a ten-year period can be attributed to changes in spousal violence involving previous spouses. In 2009, 20% of women who had contact with a previous spouse experienced physical or sexual violence by this spouse, either while still living together or after separation (Chart 1.7). This was down from 28% in 1999.

Chart 1.7

Self-reported spousal violence, by sex of victim and marital status, 1999, 2004 and 2009



† reference category

* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

Note: Data from the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut were collected using a different methodology and are therefore excluded.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1999, 2004, and 2009.

Despite the decline, rates of spousal violence within previous relationships remained significantly higher than in current unions for both women and men. Women were over six times more likely to report being victimized by a previous spouse in the last five years than by a current one. The proportion of current spouses reporting spousal violence has remained relatively stable over time at 3% of currently married women.

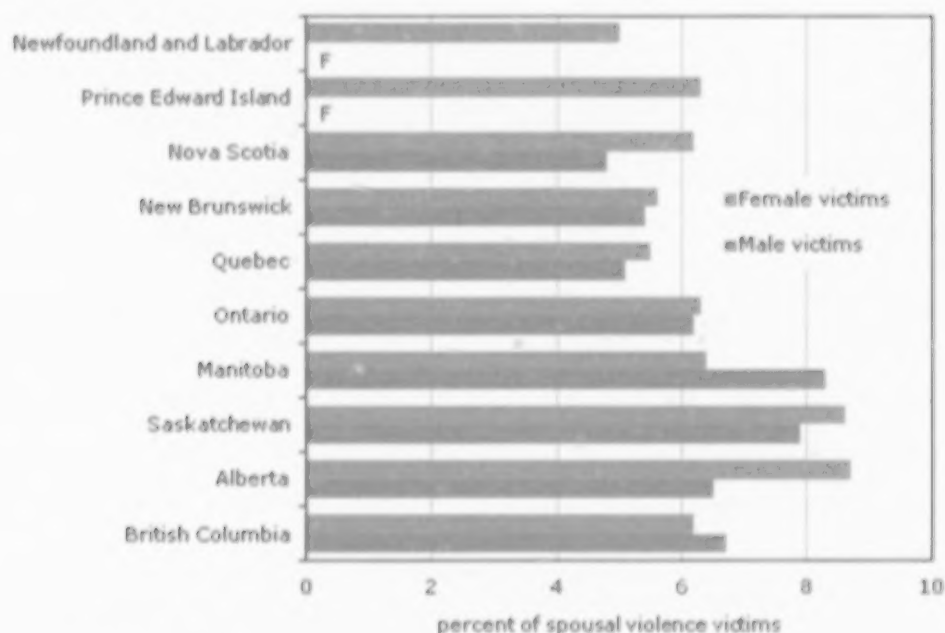
Spousal violence against women has decreased in Quebec and British Columbia

Consistent with overall trends, the proportion of women reporting spousal violence in all ten provinces remained unchanged between 2004 and 2009. However, significant drops in spousal violence against women were recorded in Quebec and British Columbia from 1999 to 2009. No jurisdiction recorded an increase in prevalence rates over this ten-year period.

A similar percentage of women reported experiencing spousal violence across the provinces. The one exception was Alberta, where the proportion of women experiencing spousal violence was significantly higher than the national average in 2009 (9% versus 6%) (Chart 1.8).

Chart 1.8

Victims of self-reported spousal violence within the past 5 years, by sex of victim and province, 2009



F too unreliable to be published

Note: Includes legally married, common-law, same-sex, separated and divorced spouses who reported having experienced violence within the 5-year period preceding the survey. Excludes data from the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut. Data for the proportion of males who experienced spousal violence in Newfoundland and Labrador and Prince Edward Island are not shown as they are too small to produce reliable estimates.

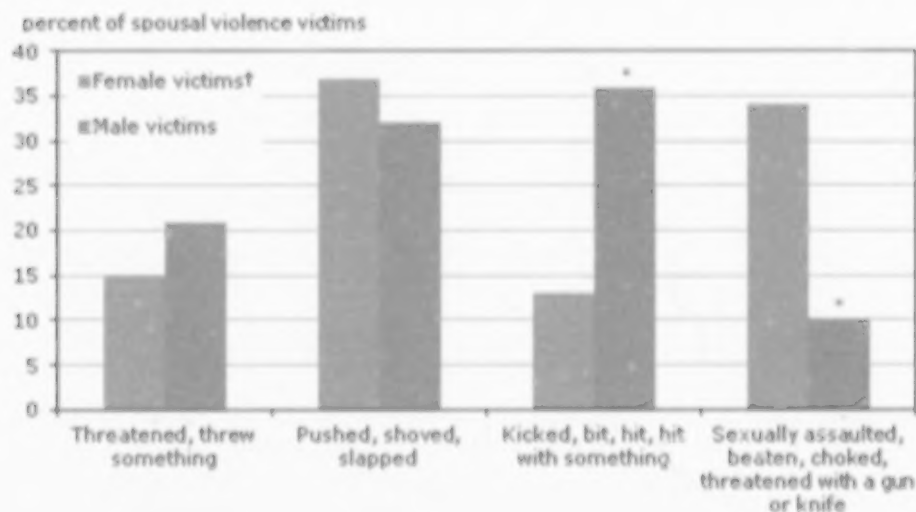
Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2009.

Severity of spousal violence decreasing

Women are more likely than men to experience the most severe forms of self-reported spousal victimization, despite having similar prevalence rates as men. In 2009, female spousal victims were over three times more likely than their male counterparts to report being sexually assaulted, beaten, choked or threatened with a gun or a knife (34% versus 10%¹) (Chart 1.9). They were also much more likely than men to experience chronic forms of spousal violence, with 53% of female victims reporting multiple victimizations compared to 35% of male victims.

Chart 1.9

Self-reported spousal violence within the past 5 years, by sex of victim and most serious type of violence, 2009



† reference category

* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

Note: Data from the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut were collected using a different methodology and are therefore excluded. Don't know and not stated are included in the total but are not shown.

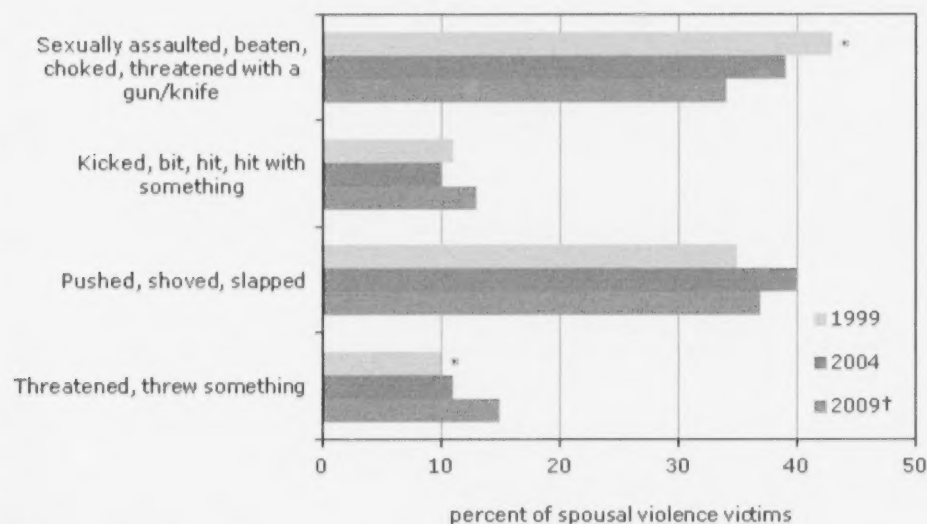
Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2009.

Another indicator of the heightened severity of spousal violence for women was their greater likelihood of being physically injured. In 2009, 42% of female spousal victims reported being injured in the previous five years, significantly higher than the 18% reported for male spousal victims. This contrasts non-spousal violence where there were no gender differences in injuries.

There is some evidence to suggest that the severity of spousal violence against women is decreasing. The proportion of women experiencing the most severe forms of violence has declined from 43% in 1999 to 34% in 2009 (Chart 1.10). Further, fewer women experienced multiple incidents of violence over this time period. In 1999, two-thirds (65%) of women who were victims of spousal violence reported that the violence occurred on more than one occasion, compared to 53% in 2009. There was, however, no change in the level of injury over this ten-year period.

Chart 1.10

Female self-reported spousal violence within the past 5 years, by most serious type of violence, 1999, 2004 and 2009



† reference category

* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

Note: Data from the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut were collected using a different methodology and are therefore excluded. Don't know and not stated are included in the total but are not shown.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1999, 2004 and 2009.

Over 1 in 10 female spousal victims were pregnant at the time of the violence

In addition to immediate physical injury to women, intimate partner violence during pregnancy can have negative repercussions on both maternal health and birth outcomes (Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada 2005). According to the 2009 GSS, there were approximately 63,300 women who self-reported being victimized by a spouse in the previous five years while they were pregnant. This represents 11% of all female spousal victims.

About 1 in 10 female spousal victims reported harm to others in family

Measuring the severity of intimate partner violence can involve traditional indicators such as type of offence, injury and use of weapon. However, for spousal violence, previous research has suggested that severity can also be measured by the harm to others, such as children of the victim or offender (Sinha 2012).

The 2009 GSS indicates that 11%^E of female spousal victims reported that their abuser had also physically or sexually abused someone else in their family. This was higher than the proportion of men reporting harm to others (6%^E). Further, in 2009, 5%^E of female spousal victims reported that children were harmed during the violent episode.

Besides direct harm, children can also witness spousal violence against women. Almost 6 in 10 (59%) female spousal victims with children reported that their children heard or saw the violent episode. This compares to 43% of male spousal victims. Further, when children did witness spousal violence, physical injuries were more than twice as common in spousal violence episodes against the child's mother than those against the child's father (52% versus 22%^E).

Sexual offences

In 1983, the *Criminal Code of Canada* was amended to replace the offences of rape and indecent assault with a three-tier structure of sexual assault.²² This legislative change aimed to reduce the stigma associated with reporting these crimes to police, by shifting the focus to the violent rather than the sexual nature of these offences (Kong et al. 2003). The 1983 amendments to the *Criminal Code* also eliminated the immunity to those accused of sexually assaulting their spouse and placed restrictions on the admissibility of the victim's prior sexual history. Since that time, a number of legislative and court decisions have further strengthened the provisions related to sexual crimes, including the introduction of provisions specific to sexual offences against children.

Police-reported sexual offences

Level 1 sexual assaults most common police-reported sexual offence against women

In 2009, a significant proportion of incidents of self-reported sexual assaults went unreported to police (for full discussion, see Section 4).²³ The high level of under-reporting of sexual assault suggests that the prevalence of police-reported sexual assaults may be an underestimation of the true extent of the problem.

Analysis of sexual offences that came to the attention of police include sexual assault levels 1, 2, and 3, as well as other sexual violations, such as voyeurism, sexual exploitation, incest, and child-specific sexual offences (e.g., invitation to sexual touching). Based on police-reported data, there were over 15,500 victims of sexual offences aged 15 years and older, most of whom were women (92%). Of these, the vast majority (91%) were level 1 sexual assaults, which were generally characterized by the absence of physical injury (75%) or the infliction of minor physical injuries to the female victim (25%).

The next most common sexual violations were other sexual offences, such as voyeurism and sexual exploitation, which represented 7% of all sex crimes. These offences rarely resulted in physical injury (5%) and when they did, the injuries were minor in nature.

The least common sexual violations, but most severe, were sexual assaults with a weapon (level 2) (2%) and aggravated sexual assaults (level 3) (less than 1%). Professional medical attention was required for 9% of female victims of level 2 sexual assault, and 38% of female victims of level 3 aggravated sexual assault. These findings were in keeping with those recorded for male victims of sexual offences.

Sexual offences against women remain stable

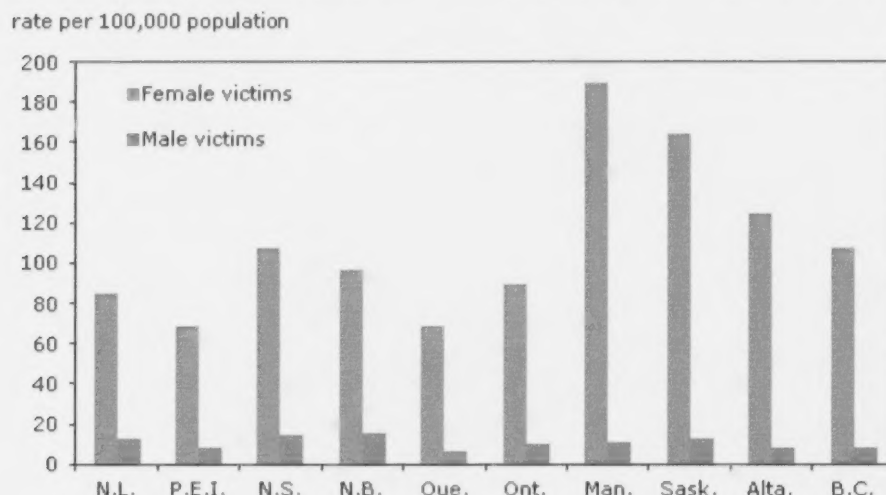
According to police-reported trend data, the rate of sexual assaults against women increased from 2009 to 2010 and remained unchanged in 2011. Trends in sexual assaults against men follow similar patterns, with the exception of a rate decrease in 2011. General trends in sexual assaults can be attributed to patterns in level 1 sexual assaults, the most common sexual offence.

Western provinces record highest rates of police-reported sexual offences

While rates of sexual offences were much higher for women than men in every province, there was considerable variation in prevalence across the country. Provincial rates of police-reported sexual offences against women were consistently elevated in the western provinces (Chart 1.11). Manitoba and Saskatchewan recorded the highest rates, at 189 and 164 victims per 100,000 women, respectively. These rates were well above those recorded in Alberta (125) and British Columbia (107), the provinces with the next highest rates. Rates were lowest in Quebec (69) and Prince Edward Island (69).

Chart 1.11

Victims of police-reported sexual offences, by sex of victim and province, 2011



Note: Rates are calculated per 100,000 population aged 15 years and older. Excludes incidents where the sex and/or age of victim was unknown.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

The prevalence of sexual offences, like other violent crimes, is substantially higher in the northern territories. Figures for Northwest Territories and Nunavut indicate that women's risk was 9 and 12 times greater in these territories than the provincial average (Table 1.10). Yukon had a rate of sexual offences against women that was over 3.5 times the provincial average.

It is important to note that while regional variations in police-reported sexual offences can signify actual differences in prevalence, other explanations for differences have been offered (Kong et al. 2003). These include differences in perceptions of sexual assault and its impact on a victim's willingness to report to police, as well as variations in demographic profile, access to services for victims, and police training.

Winnipeg, Edmonton and Halifax record highest police-reported rates of sexual offences among CMAs

The rate of police-reported sexual offences involving women as victims varies greatly among census metropolitan areas (CMAs). Rates were highest in Winnipeg, Edmonton and Halifax, with police-reported rates at least two times higher than women living in the CMAs with the lowest sexual offence rates: Trois-Rivières, Ottawa and Québec (Table 1.11).

As with overall patterns, variations by CMA generally reflect patterns in the most frequently occurring sexual offence, level 1 sexual assault. For the most severe forms of sexual offences, the highest rates of victimization by CMA somewhat deviated from the pattern for the combined rate of sexual crimes. More specifically, the highest rates of sexual assault levels 2 and 3 against women were found in Regina (11 victims per 100,000 population), Hamilton (7 per 100,000), Edmonton (6 per 100,000) and London (6 per 100,000).

Those accused of sexual offences often known to the victim

Violent crimes are most often committed by someone known to the victim. This was also the case with sexual offences. In 2011, women knew their sexual attacker in three-quarters of incidents: 45% as a casual acquaintance or friend, 17% as an intimate partner and 13% as a non-spousal family member (Table 1.12). Exactly one-quarter of sexual assaults against women were committed by a stranger.

In nearly all incidents of sexual violence against women (99%), the accused perpetrator was male. This over-representation of males as accused, while consistent with patterns in violent offending, was more prevalent in sexual crimes than other violent crimes against women (82%).

Self-reported sexual assault

According to the 2009 GSS, 7 in 10 incidents of self-reported sexual assault were committed against women. In total, there were 472,000 sexual assaults reported by women in the previous 12 months, representing a rate of 34 sexual assault incidents for every 1,000 women (Table 1.5). This compares to a rate of 15^E sexual assault incidents reported per 1,000 men.

Most incidents of self-reported sexual assaults against non-spousal victims²⁴ involved the least severe forms. In 2009, 81% of sexual assault incidents²⁵ against women involved unwanted sexual touching, including touching, grabbing, kissing or fondling. The remaining 19%^E of incidents involved sexual attacks, where the accused sexually attacked the woman by threatening her, holding her down or hurting her in some other way. These patterns in the nature of sexual victimization against women have remained constant over the last ten years.

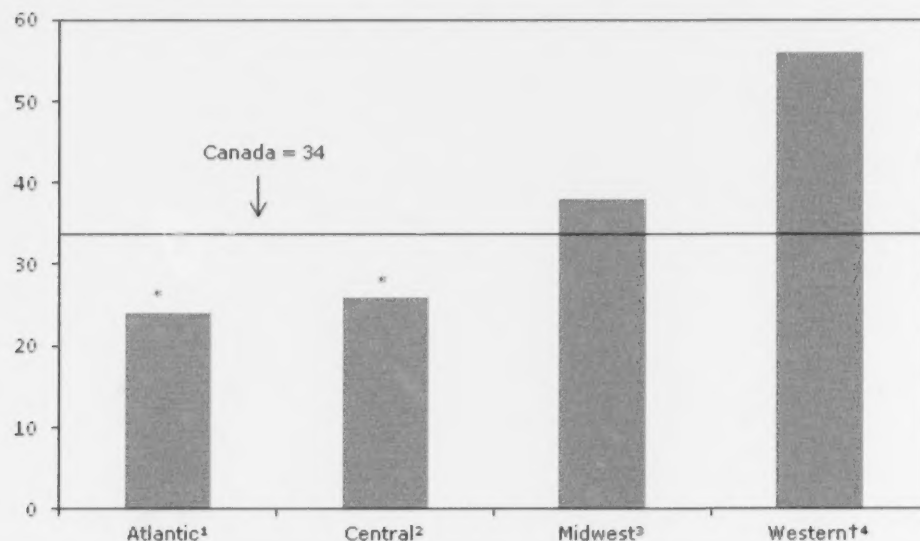
Western provinces report highest rates of sexual assault

The prevalence of self-reported sexual assault against women tends to be highest in the west and lowest in the east. In 2009, women living in Alberta and British Columbia experienced the highest rates of self-reported sexual assault (Chart 1.12).²⁶ The combined rate in these two western-most provinces was more than double the rates in the Atlantic provinces, Ontario and Quebec. For all regions, there has been no change in prevalence rates of sexual victimization between 1999 and 2009.

Chart 1.12

Self-reported sexual victimization of women, by region, 2009

rate per 1,000 population



† reference category

* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

1. Atlantic region refers to Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick.

2. Central region refers to Quebec and Ontario.

3. Midwest region refers to Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

4. Western region refers to Alberta and British Columbia.

Note: Rates are calculated per 1,000 population aged 15 years and older. Data from the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut were collected using a different methodology and are therefore excluded.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2009.

Criminal harassment

Criminal harassment, also known as stalking, first came into effect as a *Criminal Code* offence in 1993 and was created to protect victims of criminal harassment by criminalizing otherwise lawful behaviour that cumulatively amounted to 'stalking'. Criminal harassment is generally defined as committing any of the following actions in a way that causes a person to fear for their safety or for the safety of someone known to them, including:

1. repeatedly following or communicating (in-person, by phone or over the Internet) with another person;
2. repeatedly watching someone's home or workplace; or,
3. directly threatening another person known to the victim or member of their family.

Police-reported criminal harassment

Women are predominantly the victims of criminal harassment. In 2011, there were approximately 11,700 female victims of police-reported criminal harassment, accounting for over three-quarters (76%) of all victims.

Regional patterns in police-reported criminal harassment differ from violent crime overall

Provincial and territorial patterns in criminal harassment deviate somewhat from regional patterns in overall police-reported violent crime. Manitoba, the province with one of the highest provincial rates of violent crime, recorded the lowest rate of police-reported criminal harassment against women (Table 1.13).

Also diverging from general regional patterns in violent crime was the Yukon. This territory had the fourth lowest rate of criminal harassment against women at 57 victims per 100,000 population, despite having one of the highest violent crime rates in the country.

The other two territories recorded the highest prevalence rates across Canada. Provincially, criminal harassment against women was most prevalent in New Brunswick, followed by Quebec and Ontario. These provinces, along with Prince Edward Island, also had the highest provincial rates of criminal harassment against men.

CMAs in central and eastern Canada recorded the highest rates of police-reported criminal harassment

Rates of police-reported criminal harassment against women were generally higher in the central and eastern portions of the country. With nearly triple the national rate (81), Thunder Bay (230) and Saint John (227) stood out as the CMAs with the highest rate of criminal harassment against women (Table 1.14). The lowest rates of criminal harassment were recorded in Winnipeg and Halifax (18 and 35 victims per 100,000 women). Similar variations were seen for rates of criminal harassment against men.

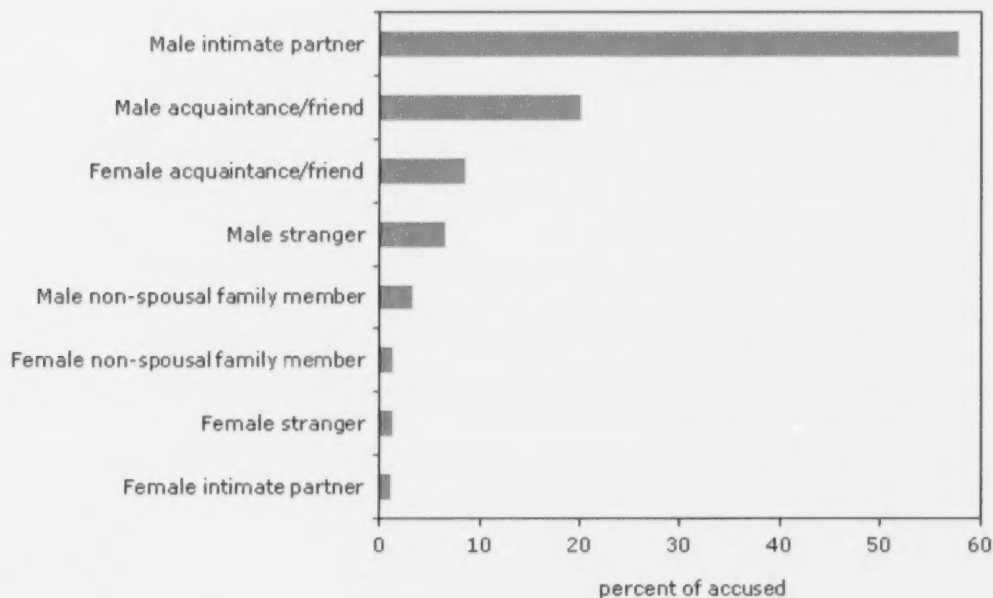
Intimate partners account for half of those accused of criminal harassment

Men are responsible for the vast majority of criminal harassment incidents against women. In 2011, 85% of perpetrators in stalking incidents against women were men, slightly higher than their representation in violence against women overall (83%).

These men were most often current or former intimate partners of the female victim, as more than half (58%) of all criminal harassment incidents against women were perpetrated by a male intimate partner (Chart 1.13). Another 20% were committed by a male acquaintance, while 9% were committed by a female friend or acquaintance. Strangers represented 8% of those accused of criminally harassing women, most of which were men.

Chart 1.13

Female victims of police-reported criminal harassment, by accused-victim relationship and sex of accused, 2011



Note: Excludes incidents where the sex and/or age was unknown.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

Criminal harassment sometimes precedes homicide

Criminal harassment, in itself, is unlikely to cause injury. In 2011, 2% of female victims of criminal harassment suffered injury, all of which were minor in nature. Despite the low occurrence of injury, it has been recognized that these acts may escalate in physical injury or death to victims (Department of Justice Canada 2004). According to homicide data over the previous decade, 39 women (2% of all female homicide victims) were killed after being criminally harassed²⁷ by the accused in the weeks, months or even years preceding their death. This includes three women who were killed in 2011.

Self-reported criminal harassment

3% of women reported being stalked in 2009

The 2009 GSS asked Canadians aged 15 years and older about their experiences of stalking. According to these data, women were twice as likely as men to self-report being a victim of stalking in the previous 12 months (3.0% versus 1.5%). In total, about 416,100 women reported being victims of stalking, compared to 204,500 men.

Quebec was the only province where the rate of self-reported criminal harassment against women was significantly higher than the national average (4% versus 3%) (Table 1.15). These findings were similar to those for men.

Data from the 2004 GSS, which included a special module on stalking, contained further information on the forms of stalking behaviours and characteristics of these self-reported victimizations. Based on findings from this survey, repeated, silent or obscene phone calls were the most common form of stalking episodes experienced by female stalking victims, whereas intimidation or threats were the most prevalent behaviour experienced by male stalking victims (AuCoin 2005).

Men were overwhelmingly the perpetrators in stalking incidents reported by women (80%). In contrast, women made up 18% of perpetrators in incidents of stalking reported by men. Results from the 2004 GSS also indicated that for both female and male victims of stalking, acquaintances or friends were most often involved, representing 45% and 57% of victims, respectively. Female victims were more often than male victims stalked by intimate partners, including spouses and dating partners (20% versus 11%).

While criminal harassment in itself rarely results in physical injury, it is often not an isolated event. Based on the 2004 GSS, 75% of women who were stalked by their estranged spouses were also the victim of physical or sexual assault by that same person (Johnson 2006).

Summary

This section examined trends and regional variations in the prevalence of violence against women in Canadian society, as well as the severity of the specific forms of gender-based violence. According to police-reported data, rates of attempted murder and physical assault against women have decreased in recent years, while sexual assault was stable in 2011. For self-reported victimization against women, rates have been relatively stable over the last ten years. Regional variations in violence against women tended to follow general patterns in violent crimes.

For both police-reported and victimization data, women are more often than men the victim of specific forms of violence. For instance, rates of police-reported intimate partner violence were higher among women than men. While rates of self-reported spousal violence were comparable between the sexes, women experienced the most severe types of spousal violence. Regardless of the survey instrument used, sexual crimes and criminal harassment was more prevalent among women than men.

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Notes

^E use with caution

1. Includes assault with a weapon or causing bodily harm (level 2) and aggravated assault in which the victim is wounded, maimed or disfigured (level 3).
2. Analysis of the three-year trend database is limited to only those offences that have complete victim records and where UCR offence classification has remained constant over the three-year period. For the purpose of this *Juristat* article, the offences included in the trend analysis include attempted murder, physical assault (levels 1, 2, and 3) and sexual assault (levels 1, 2, and 3).
3. Includes physical assault levels 1, 2, and 3.
4. Includes sexual assault levels 1, 2, and 3.
5. Incidents classified as unknown crime category were largely reported by police services that responded to the supplemental UCR2 Survey. A supplemental survey on hate crime has been conducted each year since 2006 as a means of obtaining information on hate-motivated crimes from those police services reporting microdata but who had not yet converted their electronic reporting

systems to the newest UCR2.2 version. Additional information (e.g., type of crime, sex of victim, and relationship) was not provided by these respondents.

6. A CMA consists of one or more neighbouring municipalities situated around a major urban core. A CMA must have a total population of at least 100,000 of which 50,000 or more live in the urban core. To be included in the CMA, other adjacent municipalities must have a high degree of integration with the central urban area, as measured by commuting flows derived from census data. A CMA typically comprises more than one police service.
7. Unlike for older victims, where population-based surveys such as the General Social Survey (GSS) on Victimization are able to provide indicators of self-reported victimization experiences and levels of reporting to police, there is no equivalent national survey instrument for children under the age of 15.
8. Casual acquaintance is defined as a social relationship which is neither long-term nor close.
9. Refers to women aged 18 and older.
10. An infant refers to those under the age of one.
11. Violent victimization includes sexual assault, physical assault and robbery. This also includes spousal violence but not incidents of criminal harassment.
12. Estimates for Vancouver and Ottawa-Gatineau, the third and fourth largest CMAs, were not releasable, due to a high level of sampling error.
13. The definition of Aboriginal women refers to those persons who self-reported their sex as female and who self-identified as belonging to at least one Aboriginal group, that is, North American Indian, Métis or Inuit.
14. According to the Homicide Survey, Aboriginal identity is determined based on whether the victim was a member of at least one major Aboriginal group (i.e. North American Indian, Métis or Inuit).
15. Includes incidents where Aboriginal identity is either unknown or is not collected or released by the investigating police service. The RCMP is one of the police services not collecting this information.
16. Based on the 2006 Census.
17. The rate of dating violence is underestimated. Underestimation is a result of the inflated size of population used in the calculation of dating violence rates. That is, the calculation of a dating violence rate uses the entire population of unmarried persons, regardless of their dating relationship status.
18. The Homicide Survey captures information relating to a history or pattern of family violence (e.g. spousal assaults, child or parent battering) among homicide incidents that involve family members (any person who is related to the accused by blood, marriage or adoption).
19. Percentages were calculated based on incidents where the history of family violence was known. Between 2001 and 2011, the history of family violence was unknown in 12% of all spousal homicides against women.
20. Information is based on homicides where the details of the interactions between the accused and the victim were known. This represents 56% of intimate partner homicides between 2001 and 2011.
21. Since 1999, the GSS on Victimization has collected detailed information on spousal violence. Questions are designed to capture the unique nature and dynamics of this form of violent victimization.
22. Sexual assault level 1 refers to an assault committed in circumstances of a sexual nature such that the sexual integrity of the victim is violated. It involves minor injuries or no injuries to the victim. Sexual assault level 2 refers to sexual assault with a weapon, threats or causing bodily harm. Sexual assault level 3 refers to aggravated sexual assault that results in wounding, maiming, disfiguring or endangering the life of the victim.

23. Based on data from the 2009 GSS. Refer to section on responses to violence against women for further details.
24. Spousal victims were only asked whether they were a victim of unwanted sexual activity.
25. The types of victimization in the General Social Survey on Victimization are based on *Criminal Code* definitions of criminal offences, such as three levels of sexual assault.
26. These regional groupings were created to permit comparisons.
27. Includes all criminal harassment offences (whether or not charges were ever laid) committed against the victim prior to the homicide that led to the victim's death.

Detailed data tables

Table 1.1

Victims of police-reported violence, by sex of victim and type of offence, Canada, 2011

Type of offence	Female victims		Male victims		Total	
	number	rate ¹	number	rate ¹	number	rate ¹
Homicide and other violations causing death	186	1.3	443	3.2	629	2.2
Attempted murder	150	1	437	3	587	2
Sexual offences	14,209	99	1,305	9	15,514	55
Aggravated sexual assault (level 3)	97	1	17	0	114	0
Sexual assault with a weapon (level 2)	289	2	44	0	333	1
Sexual assault (level 1)	12,879	90	1,110	8	13,989	49
Other sexual offences	944	7	134	1	1,078	4
Physical assault	104,623	727	107,486	764	212,109	746
Major assault (levels 2 and 3)	17,419	121	30,736	219	48,155	169
Common assault (level 1)	84,245	586	68,114	484	152,359	536
Other assaults ²	2,959	21	8,636	61	11,595	41
Firearms - use of, discharge, pointing	257	2	628	4	885	3
Criminal harassment	11,688	81	3,629	26	15,317	54
Indecent/harassing phone calls	7,613	53	3,447	25	11,060	39
Uttering threats	22,868	159	25,812	184	48,680	171
Robbery	7,940	55	16,793	119	24,733	87
Other violent offences ³	4,080	28	1,920	14	6,000	21
Total offences	173,614	1,207	161,900	1,151	335,514	1,180

1. Rates are calculated on the basis of 100,000 population.

2. Other assaults include unlawfully causing bodily harm, assault against peace-public officer, and other assaults.

3. Includes abduction, kidnapping, hostage-taking, arson and other violent violations.

Note: Based on victims aged 15 to 89. Excludes incidents where the sex and/or age of victim was unknown.**Source:** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

Table 1.2
Rates of selected police-reported violent crimes for women, 2009 to 2011

	2009	2010	2011	Percent change 2009 to 2011
Violent crimes	rate per 100,000 ¹			
Homicide ²	1.01	0.99	1.10	8.9
Attempted murder ³	1.25	1.05	1.03	-16.9
Physical assault ^{3, 4}	744	722	705	-5.3
Sexual assault ^{3, 5}	86	92	92	7.3

1. Rate per 100,000 population of women aged 15 years and older.

2. Based on the Homicide Survey.

3. Based on the Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey, Trend Database, which represents 99% of police services in Canada.

4. Includes assault levels 1, 2, and 3.

5. Includes sexual assault levels 1, 2, and 3.

Note: Includes victims aged 15 years and older. Excludes victims with unknown sex and/or age.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey and Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey, Trend Database.

Table 1.3
Police-reported victims of violent crime, by sex of victim and province/territory, 2011

Province/territory	Female victims		Male victims		Total	
	number	rate ¹	number	rate ¹	number	rate ¹
Newfoundland and Labrador	2,940	1,330	2,610	1,237	5,550	1,284
Prince Edward Island	682	1,096	568	961	1,250	1,030
Nova Scotia	5,201	1,262	5,111	1,324	10,312	1,292
New Brunswick	4,474	1,376	3,956	1,272	8,430	1,325
Quebec	34,813	1,036	34,564	1,049	69,377	1,042
Ontario	51,851	928	47,411	881	99,262	905
Manitoba	10,822	2,191	8,700	1,783	19,522	1,988
Saskatchewan	11,294	2,681	8,854	2,127	20,148	2,406
Alberta	21,959	1,459	20,400	1,301	42,359	1,379
British Columbia	25,369	1,301	26,826	1,410	52,195	1,355
Yukon	651	4,609	587	4,042	1,238	4,321
Northwest Territories	1,843	11,193	1,299	7,261	3,142	9,145
Nunavut	1,715	15,453	1,014	8,650	2,729	11,959
Total	173,614	1,207	161,900	1,151	335,514	1,180

1. Rates are calculated per 100,000 population aged 15 years and older.

Note: Populations based upon July 1st estimates from Statistics Canada, Demography Division. Excludes incidents where the sex and/or age of victim was unknown.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

Table 1.4
Victims of police-reported violence, by sex of victim and census metropolitan area, 2011

Census metropolitan area ^{1, 2}	Female victims		Male victims		Total	
	number	rate ³	number	rate ³	number	rate ³
St. John's	997	1,216	1,046	1,363	2,043	1,287
Halifax	2,146	1,200	2,376	1,421	4,522	1,307
Moncton	917	1,530	816	1,446	1,733	1,489
Saint John	777	1,733	591	1,442	1,368	1,594
Saguenay	607	965	602	983	1,209	974
Québec	2,589	786	2,708	856	5,297	820
Sherbrooke	621	753	605	776	1,226	764
Trois-Rivières	521	788	578	926	1,099	855
Montréal	17,467	1,053	16,884	1,053	34,351	1,053
Gatineau ⁴	1,731	1,330	1,655	1,298	3,386	1,314
Ottawa ⁵	2,423	602	2,710	704	5,133	652
Kingston	755	1,078	551	821	1,306	952
Peterborough	460	848	419	834	879	841
Toronto ⁶	20,347	911	19,298	908	39,645	910
Hamilton ⁷	2,772	1,207	2,800	1,274	5,572	1,240
St. Catharines-Niagara	1,565	815	1,304	712	2,869	765
Kitchener-Cambridge-Waterloo	2,232	1,029	2,069	957	4,301	993
Brantford	725	1,294	638	1,188	1,363	1,242
Guelph	502	937	405	798	907	869
London	1,972	929	1,662	817	3,634	874
Windsor	1,414	1,117	1,183	961	2,597	1,040
Barrie	451	774	431	774	882	774
Greater Sudbury	734	1,044	642	951	1,376	998
Thunder Bay	992	1,905	748	1,507	1,740	1,711
Winnipeg	4,596	1,436	4,398	1,408	8,994	1,422

See notes at the end of the table.

Table 1.4 (continued)

Victims of police-reported violence, by sex of victim and census metropolitan area, 2011

Census metropolitan area ^{1, 2}	Female victims		Male victims		Total	
	number	rate ³	number	rate ³	number	rate ³
Regina	1,544	1,669	1,309	1,470	2,853	1,571
Saskatoon	2,031	1,784	1,867	1,659	3,898	1,722
Calgary	4,298	843	4,482	849	8,780	846
Edmonton	6,229	1,275	5,898	1,174	12,127	1,224
Kelowna	1,218	1,539	1,253	1,652	2,471	1,594
Abbotsford–Mission	880	1,229	763	1,063	1,643	1,146
Vancouver	11,529	1,106	13,660	1,354	25,189	1,228
Victoria	1,386	861	1,650	1,093	3,036	973
CMA total	99,428	1,036	98,001	1,055	197,429	1,045
Canada	173,614	1,207	161,900	1,151	335,514	1,180

1. A census metropolitan area (CMA) consists of one or more neighbouring municipalities situated around a major urban core. A CMA must have a total population of at least 100,000 of which 50,000 or more live in the urban core. To be included in the CMA, other adjacent municipalities must have a high degree of integration with the central urban area, as measured by commuting flows derived from census data. A CMA typically comprises more than one police service.

2. CMA populations have been adjusted to follow policing boundaries.

3. Rates are calculated on the basis of 100,000 population. Populations based upon July 1st estimates from Statistics Canada, Demography Division.

4. Gatineau refers to the Quebec part of Ottawa-Gatineau CMA.

5. Ottawa refers to the Ontario part of the Ottawa-Gatineau CMA.

6. Excludes the portions of Halton Regional Police and Durham Regional Police that police the CMA of Toronto.

7. Excludes the portions of Halton Regional Police that police the CMA of Hamilton.

Note: Regional variations in rates of police-reported violence against women may be explained by a number of factors, one of which may be the application of pro-charge policies in cases of domestic violence. Includes victims aged 15 to 89 years. Excludes unknown age and/or sex of victim.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

Table 1.5
Self-reported violent victimization, by sex, 1999, 2004 and 2009

	1999		2004		2009	
	Female†	Male	Female†	Male	Female†	Male
Violent victimization	rate per 1,000 population					
Sexual assault	33	8 ^{E**}	35	7 ^{E**}	34	15 ^{E*}
Robbery	7 ^{***}	12*	8 ^E	13.3*	10	16
Physical assault	69	92*	59	91*	67	94*
Total violent	109	112	102	111	112	125

^E use with caution

† reference category

* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

** significantly different from reference category and 2009 ($p < 0.05$)

*** significantly different from 2009 ($p < 0.05$)

Note: Data from the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut were collected using a different methodology and are therefore excluded.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1999, 2004, and 2009.

Table 1.6
Self-reported violent victimization, by sex of victim and province, 2009

Province	Total violent victimization (including spousal violence)			
	Female		Male	
	number ('000)	rate ¹	number ('000)	rate ¹
Newfoundland and Labrador	20 ^E	91 ^E	F	F
Prince Edward Island	F	F	F	F
Nova Scotia	53 ^E	130 ^E	F	F
New Brunswick	F	F	53 ^E	172 ^E
Quebec	324	98	314	98*
Ontario	541	99	685	130
Manitoba	79 ^E	161 ^E	90 ^E	188 ^E
Saskatchewan	61 ^E	146 ^E	70 ^E	172 ^E
Alberta	212	148	181 ^E	122 ^E
British Columbia	247 ^E	129 ^E	262	140
Total†	1,563	112	1,704	125

^E use with caution

F too unreliable to be published

† reference category

* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

1. Rates are calculated per 1,000 population aged 15 years and older.

Note: Caution should be used in making comparisons between provinces as not all differences between provincial estimates are statistically significant. Data from the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut were collected using a different methodology and are therefore excluded.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2009.

Table 1.7

Victims of police-reported intimate partner violence, by sex of victim and census metropolitan area, 2011

Census metropolitan area (CMA) ^{1, 2}	Female victims		Male victims		Total intimate partner violence victims		Ratio of female to male victims
	number	rate ³	number	rate ³	number	rate ³	
St. John's	434	529	129	168	563	355	3.1 :1
Halifax	905	506	248	148	1,153	333	3.4 :1
Moncton	419	699	122	216	541	465	3.2 :1
Saint John	351	783	73	178	424	494	4.4 :1
Saguenay	244	388	54	88	298	240	4.4 :1
Québec	1,159	352	241	76	1,400	217	4.6 :1
Sherbrooke	283	343	47	60	330	206	5.7 :1
Trois-Rivières	245	371	50	80	295	230	4.6 :1
Montréal	8,202	495	2,056	128	10,258	314	3.9 :1
Gatineau ⁴	813	625	213	167	1,026	398	3.7 :1
Ottawa ⁵	831	206	162	42	993	126	4.9 :1
Kingston	274	391	52	77	326	238	5.0 :1
Peterborough	184	339	45	90	229	219	3.8 :1
Toronto ⁶	8,441	378	1,748	82	10,189	234	4.6 :1
Hamilton ⁷	1,074	468	256	116	1,330	296	4.0 :1
St. Catharines-Niagara	748	390	126	69	874	233	5.7 :1
Kitchener-Cambridge-Waterloo	979	451	283	131	1,262	291	3.4 :1
Brantford	307	548	94	175	401	366	3.1 :1
Guelph	202	377	50	98	252	241	3.8 :1
London	1,036	488	219	108	1,255	302	4.5 :1
Windsor	663	524	128	104	791	317	5.0 :1
Barrie	228	391	34	61	262	230	6.4 :1
Greater Sudbury	365	519	85	126	450	326	4.1 :1
Thunder Bay	464	891	125	252	589	579	3.5 :1
Winnipeg	2,118	662	435	139	2,553	404	4.8 :1

See notes at the end of the table.

Table 1.7 (continued)

Victims of police-reported intimate partner violence, by sex of victim and census metropolitan area, 2011

Census metropolitan area (CMA) ^{1, 2}	Female victims		Male victims		Total intimate partner violence victims		Ratio of female to male victims
	number	rate ³	number	rate ³	number	rate ³	
Regina	783	846	192	216	975	537	3.9 :1
Saskatoon	912	801	202	180	1,114	492	4.5 :1
Calgary	1,947	382	438	83	2,385	230	4.6 :1
Edmonton	2,829	579	632	126	3,461	349	4.6 :1
Kelowna	537	678	170	224	707	456	3.0 :1
Abbotsford–Mission	475	663	82	114	557	388	5.8 :1
Vancouver	4,695	450	1,218	121	5,913	288	3.7 :1
Victoria	566	352	177	117	743	238	3.0 :1
CMA total	43,713	455	10,186	110	53,899	285	4.2 :1
Canada	77,943	542	19,508	139	97,451	343	3.9 :1

1. A census metropolitan area (CMA) consists of one or more neighbouring municipalities situated around a major urban core. A CMA must have a total population of at 100,000 of which 50,000 or more live in the urban core. To be included in the CMA, other adjacent municipalities must have a high degree of integration with the central urban area, as measured by commuting flows derived from census data. A CMA typically comprises more than one police service.

2. CMA populations have been adjusted to follow policing boundaries.

3. Rates are calculated on the basis of 100,000 population. Populations based upon July 1st estimates from Statistics Canada, Demography Division.

4. Gatineau refers to the Quebec part of Ottawa–Gatineau CMA.

5. Ottawa refers to the Ontario part of the Ottawa–Gatineau CMA.

6. Excludes the portions of Halton Regional Police and Durham Regional Police that police the CMA of Toronto.

7. Excludes the portions of Halton Regional Police that police the CMA of Hamilton.

Note: Regional variations in rates of police-reported violence against women may be explained by a number of factors, one of which may be the application of pro-charge policies in cases of domestic violence. Intimate partner violence refers to violence committed by legally married, separated, divorced, opposite and same sex common-law, dating partners (current and previous) and other intimate partners. Intimate partner category includes victims aged 15 to 89. Excludes incidents where age and/or sex of the victim was unknown.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

Table 1.8

Victims of police-reported violent crime by intimate partners, by type of offence and sex of victim, Canada, 2011

Type of offence	Female victims		Male victims		Total	
	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent
Homicide and other violations causing death	81	0.1	13	0.1	94	0.1
Attempted murder	78	0.1	32	0.2	110	0.1
Sexual offences ¹	2,367	3	64	0	2,431	2
Physical assault	56,791	73	16,252	83	73,043	75
Major assault (levels 2 and 3) ²	8,751	11	3,913	20	12,664	13
Common assault (level 1) ³	47,142	60	12,102	62	59,244	61
Other assaults ⁴	898	1	237	1	1,135	1
Firearms - use of, discharge, pointing	57	0	6	0	63	0
Criminal harassment	6,056	8	859	4	6,915	7
Indecent/harassing phone calls	2,399	3	756	4	3,155	3
Uttering threats	7,358	9	1,365	7	8,723	9
Robbery	248	0	53	0	301	0
Other violent offences ⁵	2,508	3	108	1	2,616	3
Total offences	77,943	100	19,508	100	97,451	100

1. Includes sexual assault, classified as one of three levels according to the seriousness of the incidents. Level 1 sexual assault is the category of least physical injury to the victim; level 2 includes sexual assault with a weapon, threats to use a weapon, or causing bodily harm; and level 3 includes aggravated sexual assault which wounds, maims, disfigures, or endangers the life of the victim. Also includes other sexual crimes such as sexual interference, invitation to sexual touching, sexual exploitation, incest, corrupting children, luring a child via a computer, and voyeurism.

2. Level 2 assault is defined as assault with a weapon or causing bodily harm and level 3 assault is defined as assault that wounds, maims, disfigures or endangers the life of the victim.

3. Level 1 assault is the least serious form of assault and includes pushing, slapping, punching and face-to-face verbal threats.

4. Other assaults include unlawfully causing bodily harm, assault against peace-public officer, and other assaults.

5. Includes abduction, kidnapping, hostage-taking, arson and other violent violations.

Note: Intimate partner violence refers to violence committed by legally married, separated, divorced, common-law partners, dating partners (current and previous) and other intimate partners. The intimate partner category is based on victims aged 15 to 89. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding. Excludes incidents where the sex and/or age of victim was unknown.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

Table 1.9
Self-reported spousal violence, by sex, 1999, 2004 and 2009

Self-reported spousal violence, by sex, 1999, 2004 and 2009												
Time period	1999				2004				2009			
	Female†		Male		Female†		Male		Female†		Male	
	#		#		#		#		#		#	
	('000)	rate ('000)	rate ('000)	rate ('000)	rate ('000)	rate ('000)	rate ('000)	rate ('000)	rate ('000)	rate ('000)	rate ('000)	rate ('000)
Spousal violence within past 12 months	220	2.63**	177	2.12	196	2.17	174	1.93	178	1.90	155	1.60
Spousal violence within past 5 years	690	8.25***	549	6.58*	654	7.23	546	6.06*	601	6.38	585	6.04

† reference group

* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

** significantly different from 2009 ($p < 0.05$)

*** significantly different from 2004 and 2009 ($p < 0.05$)

Note: Data from the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut were collected using a different methodology and are therefore excluded.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1999, 2004 and 2009.

Table 1.10
Victims of police-reported sexual offences, by sex of victim and territory, 2011

Territory	Female		Male	
	number	rate ¹	number	rate ¹
Yukon	49	347	3	21
Northwest Territories	141	856	4	22
Nunavut	126	1,135	7	60
Total territories	316	758	14	32
Total provinces	13,893	97	1,291	9
Canada	14,209	99	1,305	9

1. Rates are calculated per 100,000 population aged 15 years and older.

Note: Populations based upon July 1st estimates from Statistics Canada, Demography Division. Excludes incidents where the sex and/or age of victim was unknown.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

Table 1.11
Victims of police-reported sexual offences, by sex of victim and census metropolitan area, 2011

Census metropolitan area (CMA) ^{1, 2}	Female victims		Male victims		Total	
	number	rate ³	number	rate ³	number	rate ³
St. John's	60	73	22	29	82	52
Halifax	238	133	25	15	263	76
Moncton	65	108	7	12	72	62
Saint John	48	107	8	20	56	65
Saguenay	54	86	4	7	58	47
Québec	217	66	21	7	238	37
Sherbrooke	69	84	10	13	79	49
Trois-Rivières	34	51	6	10	40	31
Montréal	1,168	70	95	6	1,263	39
Gatineau ⁴	100	77	9	7	109	42
Ottawa ⁵	265	66	22	6	287	36
Kingston	79	113	10	15	89	65
Peterborough	51	94	6	12	57	55
Toronto ⁶	1,770	79	154	7	1,924	44
Hamilton ⁷	229	100	33	15	262	58
St. Catharines–Niagara	154	80	13	7	167	45
Kitchener–Cambridge– Waterloo	235	108	15	7	250	58
Brantford	66	118	14	26	80	73
Guelph	67	125	8	16	75	72
London	229	108	22	11	251	60
Windsor	108	85	19	15	127	51
Barrie	48	82	3	5	51	45
Greater Sudbury	73	104	7	10	80	58
Thunder Bay	59	113	4	8	63	62
Winnipeg	477	149	25	8	502	79

See notes at the end of the table.

Table 1.11 (continued)

Victims of police-reported sexual offences, by sex of victim and census metropolitan area, 2011

Census metropolitan area (CMA) ^{1, 2}	Female victims		Male victims		Total	
	number	rate ³	number	rate ³	number	rate ³
Regina	87	94	10	11	97	53
Saskatoon	149	131	11	10	160	71
Calgary	463	91	18	3	481	46
Edmonton	714	146	59	12	773	78
Kelowna	101	128	6	8	107	69
Abbotsford–Mission	51	71	4	6	55	38
Vancouver	896	86	74	7	970	47
Victoria	158	98	10	7	168	54
CMA total	8,582	89	754	8	9,336	49
Canada	14,209	100	1,305	9	15,514	55

1. A census metropolitan area (CMA) consists of one or more neighbouring municipalities situated around a major urban core. A CMA must have a total population of at 100,000 of which 50,000 or more live in the urban core. To be included in the CMA, other adjacent municipalities must have a high degree of integration with the central urban area, as measured by commuting flows derived from census data. A CMA typically comprises more than one police service.

2. CMA populations have been adjusted to follow policing boundaries.

3. Rates are calculated on the basis of 100,000 population. Populations based upon July 1st estimates from Statistics Canada, Demography Division.

4. Gatineau refers to the Quebec part of Ottawa–Gatineau CMA.

5. Ottawa refers to the Ontario part of the Ottawa–Gatineau CMA.

6. Excludes the portions of Halton Regional Police and Durham Regional Police that police the CMA of Toronto.

7. Excludes the portions of Halton Regional Police that police the CMA of Hamilton.

Note: Includes victims aged 15 to 89 years. Excludes unknown age and/or sex of victim.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

Table 1.12
Female victims of police-reported sexual assault, Canada, 2011

Accused-victim relationship	Sexual assault (level 1)		Sexual assault (level 2)		Sexual assault (level 3)		Other sexual offences		Total sexual offences	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Intimate partners	2,125	16	89	31	32	33	121	13	2,367	17
Spouses	797	6	25	9	7	7	9	1	838	6
Dating partners	1,328	10	64	22	25	26	112	12	1,529	11
Non-spousal family members	1,672	13	15	5	8	8	216	23	1,911	13
Acquaintances/friends	5,911	46	95	33	44	45	352	37	6,402	45
Casual acquaintances	3,834	30	68	24	29	30	159	17	4,090	29
Close friends	999	8	17	6	12	12	69	7	1,097	8
Authority figures	256	2	1	0	0	0	81	9	338	2
Business associates	785	6	8	3	3	3	42	4	838	6
Criminal associates	37	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	39	0
Strangers	3,171	25	90	31	13	13	255	27	3,529	25
Total	12,879	100	289	100	97	100	944	100	14,209	100

Note: Includes victims aged 15 years and older. Excludes unknown age and/or sex of the victim.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

Table 1.13
Police-reported victims of criminal harassment, by sex of victim and province and territory, 2011

Province/territory	Female victims		Male victims		Total	
	number	rate ¹	number	rate ¹	number	rate ¹
Newfoundland and Labrador	131	59	44	21	175	40
Prince Edward Island	45	72	19	32	64	53
Nova Scotia	208	50	68	18	276	35
New Brunswick	323	99	92	30	415	65
Quebec	3,166	94	1,051	32	4,217	63
Ontario	5,191	93	1,579	29	6,770	62
Manitoba	94	19	27	6	121	12
Saskatchewan	301	71	90	22	391	47
Alberta	1,104	73	283	18	1,387	45
British Columbia	1,063	55	359	19	1,422	37
Yukon	8	57	3	21	11	38
Northwest Territories	42	255	11	61	53	154
Nunavut	12	108	3	26	15	66
Total	11,688	81	3,629	26	15,317	54

1. Rates are calculated per 100,000 population aged 15 years and older.

Note: Populations based upon July 1st estimates from Statistics Canada, Demography Division. Excludes incidents where the sex and/or age of victim was unknown.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

Table 1.14

Victims of police-reported criminal harassment, by sex of victim and census metropolitan area, 2011

Census metropolitan area (CMA) ^{1, 2}	Female victims		Male victims		Total	
	number	rate ³	number	rate ³	number	rate ³
St. John's	82	100	28	36	110	69
Halifax	63	35	22	13	85	25
Moncton	47	78	6	11	53	46
Saint John	102	227	29	71	131	153
Saguenay	93	148	50	82	143	115
Québec	287	87	94	30	381	59
Sherbrooke	87	105	25	32	112	70
Trois-Rivières	43	65	16	26	59	46
Montréal	1,315	79	422	26	1,737	53
Gatineau ⁴	141	108	34	27	175	68
Ottawa ⁵	169	42	28	7	197	25
Kingston	81	116	23	34	104	76
Peterborough	35	64	14	28	49	47
Toronto ⁶	2,259	101	804	38	3,063	70
Hamilton ⁷	183	80	47	21	230	51
St. Catharines-Niagara	118	61	28	15	146	39
Kitchener-Cambridge-Waterloo	306	141	115	53	421	97
Brantford	63	112	14	26	77	70
Guelph	50	93	14	28	64	61
London	133	63	24	12	157	38
Windsor	133	105	23	19	156	62
Barrie	39	67	5	9	44	39
Greater Sudbury	101	144	28	41	129	94
Thunder Bay	120	230	42	85	162	159
Winnipeg	59	18	15	5	74	12

See notes at the end of the table.

Table 1.14 (continued)

Victims of police-reported criminal harassment, by sex of victim and census metropolitan area, 2011

Census metropolitan area (CMA) ^{1, 2}	Female victims		Male victims		Total	
	number	rate ³	number	rate ³	number	rate ³
Regina	46	50	6	7	52	29
Saskatoon	114	100	33	29	147	65
Calgary	263	52	78	15	341	33
Edmonton	348	71	85	17	433	44
Kelowna	47	59	11	15	58	37
Abbotsford–Mission	31	43	12	17	43	30
Vancouver	604	58	238	24	842	41
Victoria	74	46	16	11	90	29
CMA total	7,636	80	2,429	26	10,065	53
Canada	11,688	81	3,629	26	15,317	54

1. A census metropolitan area (CMA) consists of one or more neighbouring municipalities situated around a major urban core. A CMA must have a total population of at 100,000 of which 50,000 or more live in the urban core. To be included in the CMA, other adjacent municipalities must have a high degree of integration with the central urban area, as measured by commuting flows derived from census data. A CMA typically comprises more than one police service.

2. CMA populations have been adjusted to follow policing boundaries.

3. Rates are calculated on the basis of 100,000 population. Populations based upon July 1st estimates from Statistics Canada, Demography Division.

4. Gatineau refers to the Quebec part of Ottawa–Gatineau CMA.

5. Ottawa refers to the Ontario part of the Ottawa–Gatineau CMA.

6. Excludes the portions of Halton Regional Police and Durham Regional Police that police the CMA of Toronto.

7. Excludes the portions of Halton Regional Police that polices the CMA of Hamilton.

Note: Includes victims aged 15 to 89 years. Excludes unknown age and/or sex of victim.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

Table 1.15

Self-reported criminal harassment, by sex of victim and region, 2009

Region	Female		Male		Total	
	# ('000)	percent	# ('000)	percent	# ('000)	percent
Atlantic ¹	22 ^E	2.15 ^E	13 ^E	1.35 ^E	35	1.76
Central²	287	3.28*	138	1.64	425	2.47
Quebec	131	3.98*	88	2.77*	219	3.38*
Ontario	156	2.85	50 ^E	0.95 ^{E*}	206	1.92
Midwest ³	28 ^E	3.07 ^E	20 ^E	2.23 ^E	47	2.65
Western ⁴	80	2.39	34 ^E	1.00 ^E	113	1.69
Provincial total†	416	2.97	205	1.50	621	2.24

^E use with caution

† reference category

* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

1. Atlantic region refers to Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick.

2. Central region refers to Quebec and Ontario.

3. Midwest region refers to Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

4. Western region refers to Alberta and British Columbia.

Note: Data from the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut were collected using a different methodology and are therefore excluded.**Source:** Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2009.

Section 2: Risk factors for violence against women

By Hope Hutchins

While violence against women can cross all socio-demographic boundaries, data suggest that some groups of women and girls are more at risk. Previous research has suggested that particular socio-demographic and community factors are associated with a higher risk of self-reported violent victimization (Perreault and Brennan 2010). While these risk factors cannot be considered direct causes of victimization, they can individually or together contribute to an increased likelihood of victimization. Identifying risk factors, therefore, can help inform the maintenance and development of preventive strategies and responses to violence against women (Johnson 2006).

This section examines risk factors for violence against women aged 15 years and over using two types of data: (i) police-reported data from both the Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Survey and the Homicide Survey and (ii) self-reported victimization data from the General Social Survey (GSS) on victimization.¹ Results are primarily based on descriptive analysis, which examines the prevalence of violent victimization for each individual "socio-demographic", "lifestyle" or "community-level" factor.² For the analysis of self-reported victimization, this discussion also indicates whether factors remain significant predictors of violent victimization after controlling for other known risk factors.³

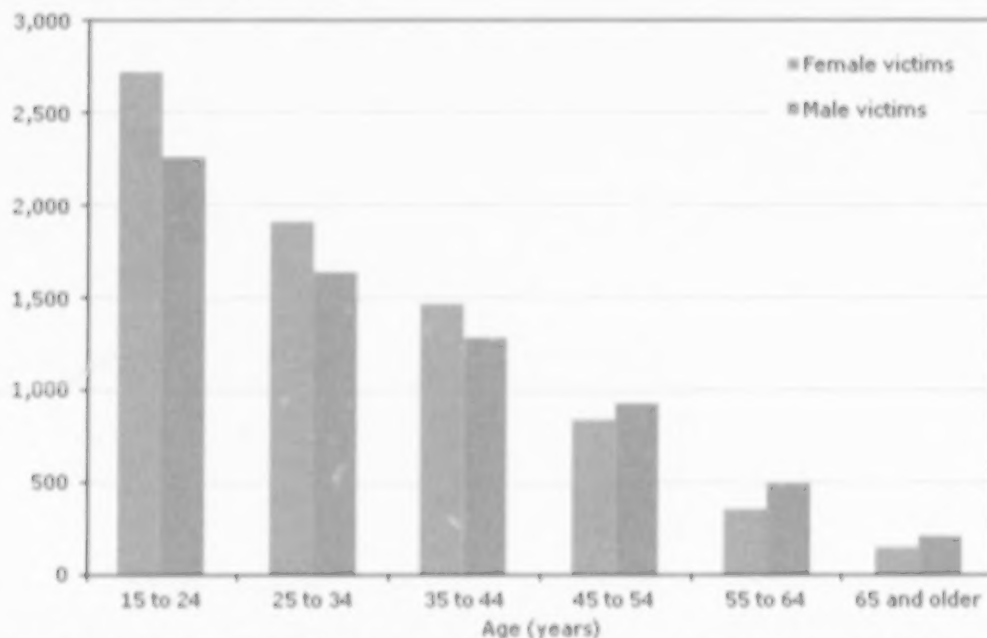
Due to differences in the type and scope of information collected by police-reported and self-reported surveys, the analysis of risk factors varies by data source and should not be compared. Risk factors for police-reported violent crime are identified for spousal, dating, and non-intimate partner violence, while risk factors for self-reported victimization are described for spousal and non-spousal violent victimization.

Police-reported violence against women

Females aged 15 to 24 most at risk of police-reported violence

Consistent with patterns for violence overall, being young was a risk factor for all forms of police-reported violence against women, both within and outside the context of intimate partner relationships. In 2011, females aged 15 to 24 generally experienced the highest rates of violence, with rates subsequently decreasing with increasing age (Chart 2.1). The one exception was dating violence against women, where women aged 25 to 34 were most at risk (Chart 2.2). Even so, females aged 15 to 24 continued to be most vulnerable to certain types of dating violence, namely sexual violations.

Chart 2.1
Victims of police-reported violent crime, by sex and age group of victim, Canada, 2011
rate per 100,000 population



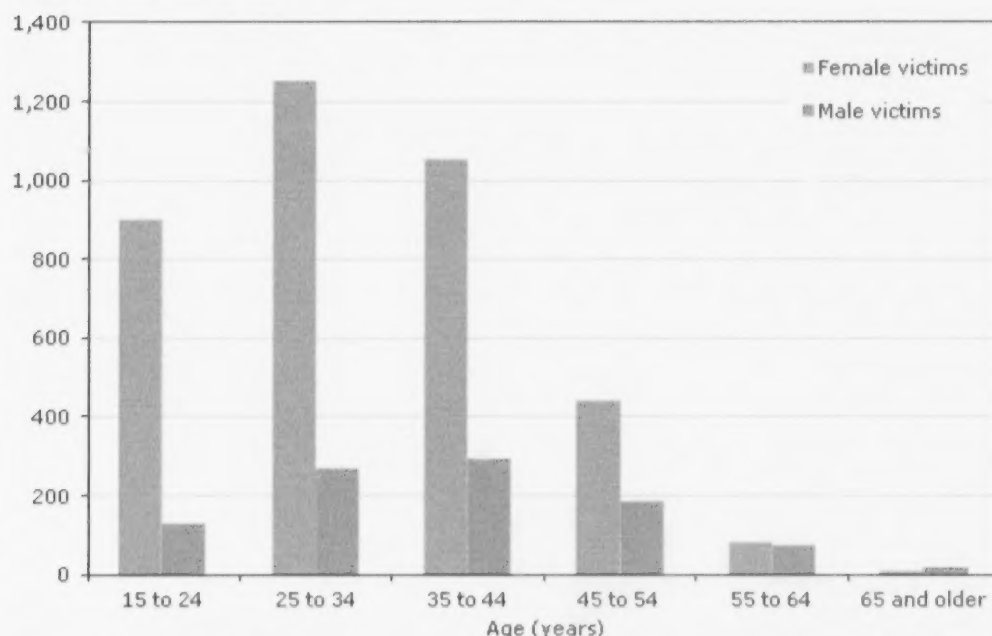
Note: Includes the population aged 15 years and over. Population estimates based upon July 1st estimates from Statistics Canada, Demography Division. Excludes incidents where the age and/or sex of the victim was unknown.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

Chart 2.2

Victims of police-reported dating violence, by sex and age group of victim, Canada, 2011

rate per 100,000 population



Note: Includes the population aged 15 years and over. Population estimates based upon July 1st estimates from Statistics Canada, Demography Division. Excludes incidents where the age, sex, and/or the relationship to the accused of the victim was unknown.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

Similar age-based risk was present when violence against women escalated to homicide. Based on data over the last decade, females aged 15 to 24 were most at risk. This was particularly evident for spousal homicide, where there were 18.8 spousal homicides per million females aged 15 to 24 (Table 2.1). This rate drops down to 10.3 homicides per million women aged 25 to 34, and 7.5 homicides per million women aged 35 to 44. Regardless of age, spousal homicide rates were consistently higher for women than men.

As with dating violence in general, the risk of dating homicide peaks at a later age. The rate of dating homicides for women was highest among those aged 35 to 44. Women's rates were consistently higher than the rates for men until the age of 55, after which men's rates were more elevated than those for women.

The rate of non-intimate partner homicide against women, while lower than the rate against men for every age group, was highest among females aged 15 to 24 (Table 2.1). The rate generally decreases with age, though rates increase for women aged 55 and older.

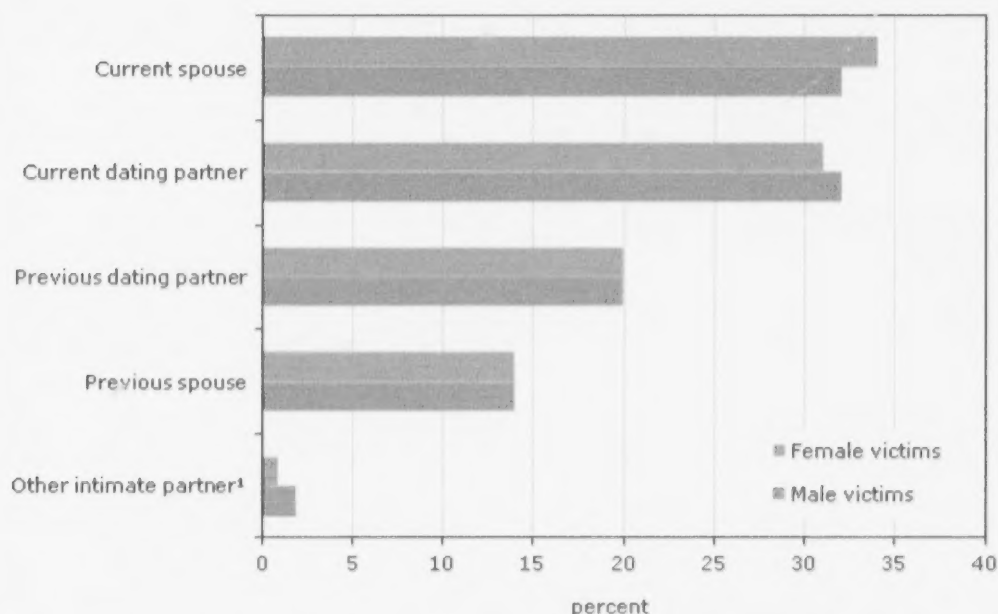
Women most at risk from an intimate partner

As discussed in section 1, women are most at risk of violence from an intimate partner⁴ than any other type of perpetrator, though not all women experience the same level of risk from an intimate partner. In 2011, the rate of police-reported dating violence against women was 1.6 times higher than the spousal violence rate (631 versus 395 per 100,000 women).⁵

Also, there were notable differences in the proportion of female victims who were in an ongoing or previous relationship with the accused intimate partner. According to police-reported data, about one-third (34%) of female intimate partner victims of violence were currently married (legally or common-law) to the perpetrator, followed by those currently dating (31%), previously dating (20%) and previously married (14%) (Chart 2.3).

Chart 2.3

Victims of police-reported intimate partner violence, by sex and relationship of accused to victim, Canada, 2011



1. 'Other intimate' partners are defined in the Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey as "a person with whom the victim had a sexual relationship or a mutual sexual attraction but to which none of the other relationship options apply".

Note: Includes those aged 15 years and over. Excludes incidents where the age, sex, and/or the relationship to the accused of the victim was unknown.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

While it is not possible to calculate rates for current or previous partners based on the Incident-based Survey,⁶ data from the Homicide Survey suggest that once differences in the size of the married population are considered, the risk of spousal homicide was highest among legally separated women. In particular, over the previous five years, women were six times more likely to be killed by an ex-spouse than by a current legally married spouse (18.0 homicides per million versus 3.1 per million).⁷

Aboriginal women disproportionately represented as homicide victims

Aboriginal people, including women, are often overrepresented as victims of violent crime, including lethal forms of violence (Perreault 2011, Brennan 2011). While there are limitations in examining Aboriginal identity of victims using the Incident-based UCR Survey,⁸ analysis is possible using the Homicide Survey. An important caveat is the high level of homicide incidents where the Aboriginal identity was unknown.⁹

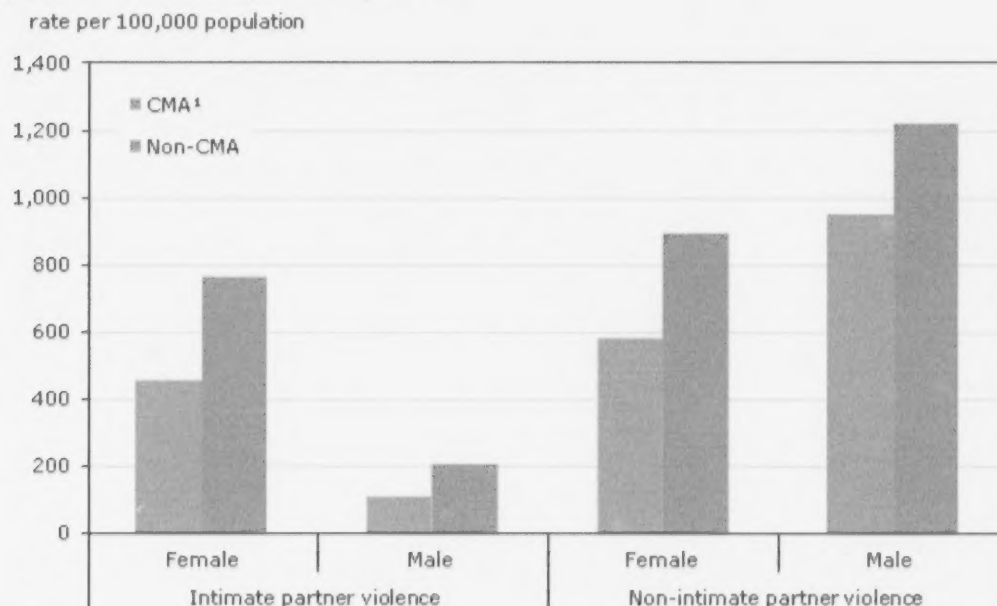
Despite Aboriginal women representing about 4% of the population in 2006,¹⁰ between 2001 and 2011, Aboriginal women accounted for at least 11% of dating homicide victims and at least 10% of non-intimate partner homicide victims¹¹ (Table 2.2). The proportion of Aboriginal women killed by a spouse (4%) was similar to their representation in the total population.

Rates of police-reported violence against women higher in non-CMAs than within CMAs

For both intimate partner violence and non-intimate partner violence overall, police-reported rates of violence against women were higher in non-census metropolitan areas (CMAs),¹² including small cities, towns and rural areas, than within CMAs (Chart 2.4).¹³ This was also true for nearly all types of intimate partner and non-intimate partner violence, with the one exception of robbery.

Chart 2.4

Victims of police-reported intimate partner and non-intimate partner violence, by victim's place of residence, Canada, 2011



1. A census metropolitan area (CMA) consists of one or more neighbouring municipalities situated around a major urban core. A CMA must have a total population of 100,000 of which 50,000 or more live in the urban core. To be included in the CMA, other adjacent municipalities must have a high degree of integration with the central urban area, as measured by commuting flows derived from census data. A CMA typically comprises more than one police service. CMA populations have been adjusted to follow policing boundaries.

Note: Includes the population aged 15 years and over. Population estimates based upon July 1st estimates from Statistics Canada, Demography Division. Excludes incidents where the age, sex, and/or the relationship to the accused of the victim was unknown.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

Self-reported victimization of women

Young women most at risk of self-reported violence

There are many socio-demographic factors associated with the self-reported violent victimization of women, many of which are characteristics that an individual cannot change, such as age. As with police-reported findings, being young was a significant risk factor for women's self-reported spousal and non-spousal violent victimization.

According to the 2009 GSS, women aged 15 to 34¹⁴ with a current or former spouse¹⁵ were about two to three times as likely as their older counterparts to report experiencing spousal victimization in the last 12 months (Table 2.3). Similar findings were evident for non-spousal violent victimization, as the rate for women aged 15 to 34 was over three times higher than the rate for those aged 35 and over (171 versus 50 incidents per 1,000 population) (Table 2.4).

This higher prevalence of non-spousal violence among young women was seen for all three types of violent victimization, namely physical assault, sexual assault and robbery. It was, however, most pronounced for sexual assault, where women under the age of 35 years had victimization rates that were five times higher than those of their older counterparts (73 versus 14¹⁶ incidents per 1,000 population).

Being young remained a strong predictor of violent victimization against women even after controlling for other factors associated with victimization. In other words, young age had a unique effect on women's risk of self-reported victimization, whereby young women, regardless of their other personal characteristics, their lifestyle behaviours or community, were particularly vulnerable to violent crime by either a spouse or another perpetrator.

Single women most at risk of violent victimization

The risk of self-reported violent victimization can vary by marital status, such as whether individuals are married or in a common-law relationship. For women, however, the prevalence of victimization by a current spouse¹⁶ in the last 12 months did not differ between those in a legally married or common-law union. About 1.2% of legally married women were victims of spousal violence, similar to the proportion (1.7%^E) of women in common-law relationships. This was unlike the pattern for men, where the risk of spousal violence was about five times higher for men in common-law unions, compared to those who were legally married (3.8%^E versus 0.8%^E).

The rate of non-spousal victimization for single women was approximately four times higher than the rate for women in legally married or common-law unions (199 versus 50 incidents per 1,000 population) and three times higher than for women who were separated, divorced, or widowed (65 incidents per 1,000 population). This heightened risk among single women persisted even after accounting for other factors associated with victimization.

Prevalence of spousal violence elevated among lesbian and bisexual women

The 2009 GSS indicates that women who self-identified as lesbian or bisexual were significantly more likely than heterosexual women to report violence by a current or previous spouse in the previous five years (20.8%^E versus 6.1%)¹⁷ (Table 2.5). It should be noted that the sex of the abusive spouse was not asked; therefore, the prevalence rates for lesbian or bisexual women could include some opposite-sex spouses.

Although estimates were not releasable for women who identified as lesbian or bisexual for non-spousal violence, overall non-spousal violence rates in the past 12 months of those who self-identified as gay or lesbian or bisexual were nearly five times the rate for those who self-identified as heterosexual (394^E versus 81 incidents per 1,000 population) (Table 2.4).

Women who participated in many evening activities at higher risk of spousal and non-spousal violence

Women who participated in a greater number of evening activities¹⁸ per month had a higher prevalence of both spousal and non-spousal victimization. At particular risk were women who engaged in 30 or more evening activities per month. These women had more than double the risk of spousal violence compared to women who participated in 20 to 29 evening activities per month (3.1%^E versus 1.5%^E) (Table 2.3).

Similar risks were found for victimization outside a spousal relationship. The rate of victimization was highest among women who engaged in 30 or more evening activities a month. This rate was nearly double that of women who engaged in 20 to 29 activities, nearly three times higher than those who engaged in 10 to 19 activities, and more than five times higher than those who engaged in the fewest number of evening activities (less than 10 per month) (Table 2.4).

Even when other risk factors were taken into account, participating in a greater number of evening activities per month remained a significant predictor of women's risk of non-spousal victimization. However, engaging in 30 or more evening activities did not independently increase women's risk of spousal violence, when all other analyzed factors were considered.

Educational attainment and income not linked to women's risk

Overall, educational attainment had no bearing on women's risk of either spousal or non-spousal violence. This was also the case for income, a factor often influenced by levels of education. That is, income was not related to women's risk of either spousal or non-spousal violence.

Retired women experience lowest risk of non-spousal violent victimization

Time spent in particular domains, such as the household, paid employment, school, and leisure, may protect or expose individuals to potential perpetrators (de Léséleuc 2007). There is some evidence to suggest that this was the case for retired women's risk of non-spousal violence. According to the 2009 GSS, retired women were less likely than those working a paid job to be victimized by someone other than a spouse, when other factors were taken into account.

While the prevalence of spousal and non-spousal violence was lower among those whose main activity was household work, this could be attributed to other risk factors (Table 2.3, Table 2.4). Similarly, while students had more than double the rates of non-spousal violence compared to women in paid employment (204 versus 98 per 1,000 population), this elevated rate among students could be explained by the finding that students tend to be young, single and participate in more evening activities. Being a student on its own did not increase women's risk of violence.

Non-spousal victimization higher among women who used alcohol or drugs

The 2009 GSS gathered information on how often individuals, regardless of whether or not they were a victim, drank alcoholic beverages or used drugs in the previous month. The prevalence of spousal violence was similar between women who drank heavily, defined as consuming five or more alcoholic drinks in one sitting, and those who did not (2.8%^E and 1.7%). It is important to note that the GSS does not indicate whether this alcohol or drug use began before or after the violent victimization.¹⁹

In contrast, women who drank heavily were more often a victim of non-spousal violence than those who did not drink heavily (185 incidents per 1,000 population versus 68 incidents per 1,000 population). However, drinking heavily was not an independent contributor to risk, but rather it was associated with other analyzed risk factors, such as being young, single and participating in evening activities.

The prevalence of spousal and non-spousal violence was consistently higher among women who reported using drugs.²⁰ In 2009, women who used drugs were more than three times as likely to self-report being a victim of spousal violence in the previous 12 months (5.4%^E versus 1.6%) (Table 2.3). Similarly, the prevalence rate of non-spousal victimization was over four times higher among women who used drugs compared to other women (285 versus 68 incidents per 1,000 population) (Table 2.4).

The higher prevalence of spousal violence among women who used drugs may be explained by the presence of other risk factors for violent victimization, as drug use on its own did not increase risk of spousal violence.²¹ For non-spousal victimization, however, the risk of victimization among women who used drugs remained significantly higher, even after controlling for other risk factors.

Women with an activity limitation more likely to experience spousal violence

Activity limitation,²² such as a physical or mental condition or health problem that restricts a person's activities, has been found to be associated with a significantly greater risk of violent victimization (Perreault 2009). Results from the 2009 GSS confirm that the prevalence rates of spousal and non-spousal violence were often higher among women with an activity limitation.

In particular, women with activity limitations experienced rates of spousal violence in the past five years that were nearly double those without limitations (9.3% versus 5.0%) (Table 2.5). This differs from men with some type of activity limitation, who experienced no increased risk of spousal violence.

The impact of activity limitations on women's risk of non-spousal violent victimization varied by type of violence. While women with activity limitations were not at greater risk of non-spousal violence overall,²³ they were over 2.5 times more likely to be a victim of robbery compared to women without any activity limitations (18^E versus 7^E incidents per 1,000 population).

When controlling for other socio-demographic factors, as well as lifestyle and community characteristics, women with an activity limitation continued to have an increased risk of spousal and non-spousal victimization. The heightened risk of violence among women with activity limitations may be related to their greater vulnerability and dependence on others (Brownridge 2006).

Spousal violence less prevalent among immigrant women than Canadian-born women

In Canada, there can be considerable overlap in the population of immigrant and visible minority women. Over three-quarters (76%) of recent immigrants in Canada were visible minorities in 2006, and more than two-thirds (68%) of visible minorities were immigrants (Chui and Maheux 2011, Chui 2011). The socio-demographic characteristics of these groups, while vastly heterogeneous, can differ from other groups of women, notably in the languages spoken (Chui 2011). As a result, it is important to note that since the GSS is conducted in English and French, some immigrants and visible minorities may be unable to participate due to language barriers²⁴ and may be under-represented among spousal and non-spousal violence victims (Sinha 2012, Johnson 2006).

According to the 2009 GSS, immigrant women had a lower risk of spousal violence compared to Canadian-born women. Specifically, 4.9% of immigrant women self-reported being a victim of spousal violence in the previous five years, compared to 6.8% of non-immigrant women (Table 2.5). This lower risk of spousal violence did not persist when other factors were taken into account. Although findings were not releasable by gender for non-spousal violence, immigrants were generally much less likely than non-immigrants to be victimized outside a spousal relationship in the previous 12 months (48^E versus 110 incidents per 1,000 population) (Table 2.4).

Among the female visible minority population,²⁵ the rate of spousal victimization was equal to the rate for non-visible minorities. This is in contrast to visible minority men who were less likely to state that they had been a victim of spousal violence compared to non-visible minority men (3.2%^E versus 6.4%). Due to small counts, it was not possible to examine visible minority women's risk of non-spousal violence, though overall, visible minorities had lower rates of non-spousal victimization than non-visible minorities (63^E versus 103 incidents per 1,000 population).

Prevalence of victimization higher among Aboriginal women

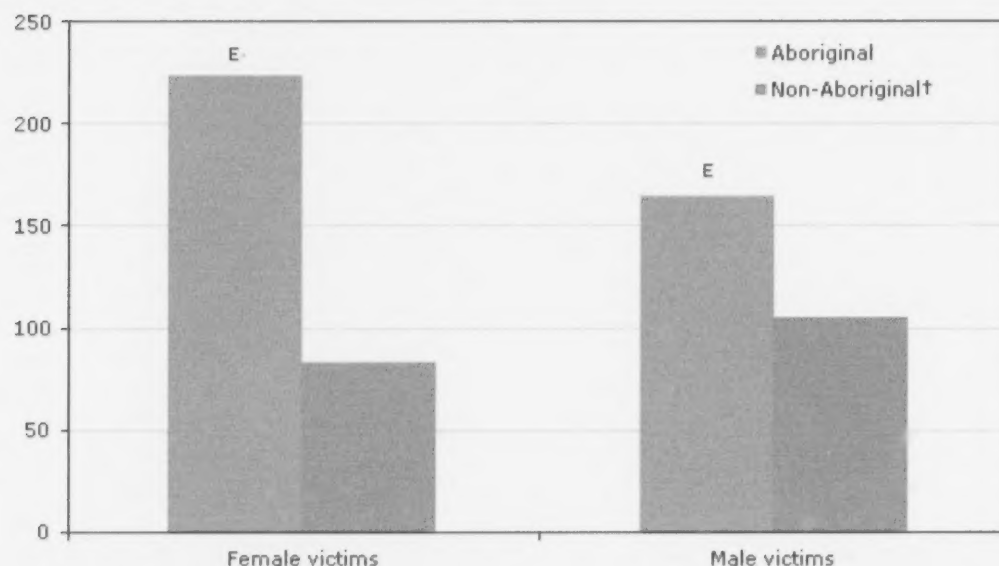
As previously mentioned, Aboriginal persons are more often the victim of violent victimization compared to non-Aboriginal persons (Brennan 2011, Brzozowski et al. 2006). The higher risk for violence against Aboriginal women may be partially explained by factors associated with violent victimization, such as age, marital status and participation in evening activities (Perreault 2011). Indeed, Aboriginal women's 2.5 times higher rate of spousal violence (Table 2.5) can be explained by the presence of these other analyzed risk factors, as identifying as an Aboriginal woman was not independently related to spousal violence risk.

While Aboriginal women also experienced much higher rates of non-spousal violence compared to non-Aboriginal women (Chart 2.5), other factors could not fully explain this heightened risk.

Chart 2.5

Self-reported non-spousal violence victimization rates in the past 12 months, by sex of victim and victim's Aboriginal identity, Canada, 2009

rate per 1,000 population



^E use with caution

† reference category

* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

Note: Rates are calculated per 1,000 population aged 15 years and older. Responses of "Don't know" and "Not stated" are not listed, therefore, the sum of percentages may not add up to 100%. Data from the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut were collected using a different methodology and are therefore excluded.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2009.

Some possible reasons for the higher prevalence of violent victimization among the Aboriginal population may be attributed to factors specific to Aboriginal persons. The Standing Committee on the Status of Women (2011) identified the following possible larger socio-economic factors as factors related to violence:

- economic and social inequalities,
- discrimination against Aboriginal peoples,
- possible loss of understanding of their history and culture, and
- residential schools and the intergenerational cycle of violence.²⁶

Spousal violence more common among women who experienced emotional and financial abuse

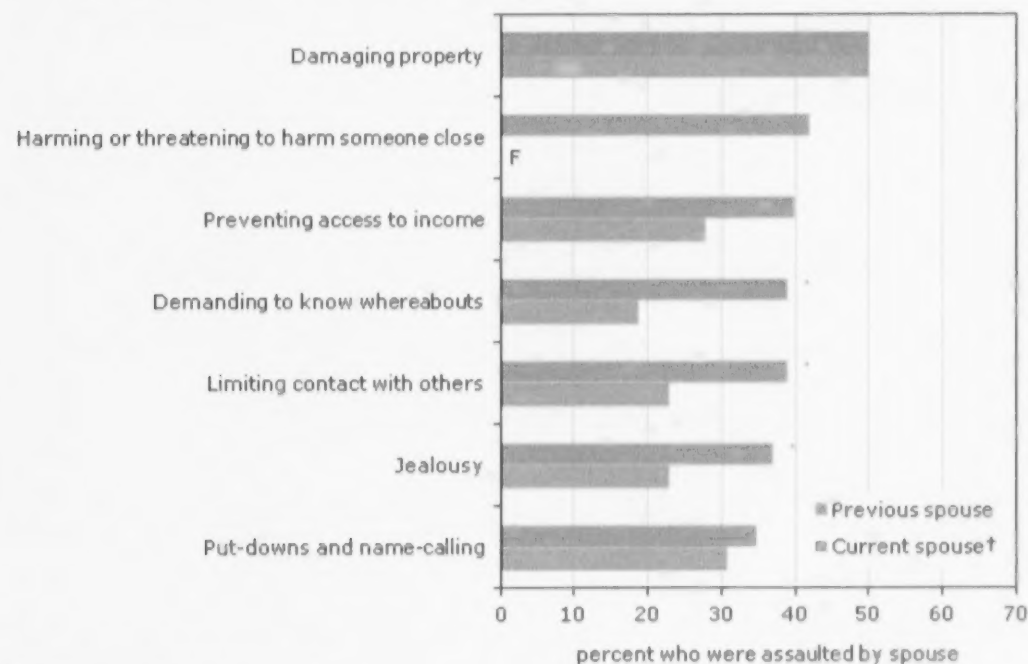
Some risk factors are specific to spousal violence, such as a spouse's psychologically abusive behaviour. These behaviours, which can be precursors to the commission of physical or sexual assault, can include limiting contact with others, put-downs and name-calling, jealousy, harming or threatening to harm someone close, demanding to know whereabouts, damaging property, and preventing access to income. In 2009, 18% of women reported experiencing emotional or financial abuse by a current or previous partner at some point during their relationship. This was not statistically different to the proportion for men (17%).

Victimization data indicate that women and men who had experienced emotional or financial abuse by a spouse were much more likely to be physically and/or sexually abused by their current or previous spouse in the previous five years. In 2009, 19% of women who experienced emotional or financial abuse by a current spouse reported being a victim of physical or sexual assault by this same spouse. This compares to 2% of women who did not experience emotional or financial abuse. The heightened risk was also evident when the violence involved previous spouses (32% versus 4%^E).

Some forms of psychologically abusive behaviour were more often related to violent acts than others. The 2009 GSS found that the risk of physical or sexual abuse was highest for women who reported that their spouse damaged their personal property (Chart 2.6). Overall, emotional and financial abuse remained correlated to spousal violence, even when other risk factors were taken into consideration.

Chart 2.6

Percentage of women that have ever been emotionally or financially abused, who were physically or sexually assaulted by their spouses in the last 5 years, by type of psychological abuse and relationship status, Canada, 2009



F too unreliable to be published

† reference category

* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

Note: Emotional or financial abuse is measured over the respondent's lifetime. 'Spouse' refers to legally married and common-law spouses, including same-sex spouses. Responses of 'Don't know' and 'Not stated' are not listed, therefore, the sum of percentages may not add up to 100%. Data from the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut were collected using a different methodology and are therefore excluded.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2009.

Community factors had little impact on women's risk of victimization

The 2009 GSS captured information related to respondents' communities, including the individual's place of residence, their levels of social ties and interactions, and their perceptions of social disorder in their neighbourhood, such as noisy neighbours, vandalism, people using or dealing drugs, and prostitution.²⁷ Some research has suggested the absence of social ties can reduce an overall sense of community well-being, resulting in negative consequences, such as increased levels of crime (Gannon et al. 2005). Furthermore, signs of physical and social disorder may indicate that a community lacks surveillance and is uncared for by its residents (Keown 2008).

According to victimization data, the effect of community factors²⁸ on women's risk of victimization was minimal. There was no impact on victimization for women living in a census metropolitan area compared to those residing in small cities, towns and rural areas. Similarly, the social ties within a community rarely contributed to women's risk. For instance, women who reported knowing few or no people in their neighbourhood had a similar risk of victimization, both spousal and non-spousal, as women with many contacts (Table 2.6).

While women living in a neighbourhood with any indicators of social disorder did not have an elevated risk of spousal violence compared to other women,²⁹ they were nearly three times as likely to be a victim of non-spousal violent victimization (169 incidents per 1,000 population versus 60 per 1,000). In addition, social disorder was independently associated with this higher risk of non-spousal victimization.

Text box 2.1

Risks of self-reported violent victimization in the territories³⁰

Victimization data for the territories were collected using a different methodology. As a result, analysis of risk factors for self-reported violent victimization against women in the territories is examined separately from the provinces.

Victims of self-reported spousal violence in the territories tend to be young

Similar to findings for women residing in the provinces, younger women in the territories were more likely to be victims of spousal violence. Women under the age of 35 were more than three times as likely as those aged 35 and over to have experienced violence by a current or previous spouse in the last 5 years (20%^E versus 6%^E). However, there was no statistical difference between these groups for non-spousal violence in the territories.

While the role of marital status on victimization could not be explored by gender due to small counts, those who were in common-law relationships were three times as likely as those who were married to have experienced violence by a current spouse (12%^E versus 4%^E). With regard to non-spousal victimization, those who were single had rates that were over twice as high as those who were married or in common-law relationships (341^E versus 103^E incidents per 1,000 population).

Participation in evening activities had no impact on prevalence of spousal violence in the territories

When looking at lifestyle characteristics, there was no difference in women's risk of spousal violence between women who participated in 30 or more evening activities and those who participated in fewer activities. Estimates for non-spousal violence by gender were too small to release findings, though overall, individuals' participation in evening activities was also not linked to non-spousal violence.

Activity limitation increases risk of non-spousal violent victimization

In contrast to findings for women living in the provinces, having an activity limitation did not increase the risk of spousal violence among women in the territories. Although findings were not releasable by gender due to small counts for non-spousal victimization, individuals with an activity limitation had rates of non-spousal violence that were higher than those without an activity limitation (310^E versus 129^E incidents per 1,000 population).

Aboriginal persons more at risk for spousal and non-spousal violence in the territories

Consistent with the findings from the provinces, violence was more prevalent among individuals who self-identified as Aboriginal persons in the territories. More specifically, Aboriginal women were more than three times as likely as non-Aboriginal women to report being victimized by a spouse in the past 5 years (18%^E versus 5%^E). A similar pattern was found for men, though the difference in rates between Aboriginal men and non-Aboriginal men was less pronounced (16%^E versus 6%^E).

While gender breakdowns by Aboriginal identity were not possible for non-spousal violence, rates were generally higher among Aboriginal persons than non-Aboriginal persons (252^E versus 145^E incidents per 1,000 population).³¹

Spousal violence much more prevalent among women who experienced emotional and financial abuse

In 2009, 44% of women living in the territories who reported emotional or financial abuse also reported physical and/or sexual assault by a current or previous spouse in the past 5 years. This was over twenty times higher than the proportion of women who reported never experiencing emotional or financial abuse (2%). Similar findings were evident for men.

Text box 2.1 (continued)

Risks of self-reported violent victimization in the territories³⁰**Women with lower incomes experience higher rates of spousal violence**

Women in the territories with an income of less than \$60,000 were found to be three times as likely as other women to report spousal violence (19%^E versus 6%^E). In contrast, rates of non-spousal victimization were similar across all income levels.

Women with high school or less were almost twice as likely to state that their spouse had been violent towards them compared to those with higher levels of education. There was no observed difference for non-spousal victimization rates.

Unlike findings for the provinces, the prevalence of spousal violence did not vary by women's main activity. That is, a similar proportion of women working at a paid job or business and women participating in other main activities reported being a victim of spousal violence. While estimates were not releasable by gender for non-spousal violence, there was no statistically significant difference in overall risk of non-spousal violence by type of main activity.

Heavy drinking increases risk for women's spousal victimization

In contrast to findings for women living in the provinces, women in the territories who drank heavily (5 or more alcoholic drinks in one sitting) were more likely to have been violently victimized by a spouse in the previous 5 years. In particular, 27%^E of women who drank heavily also reported being a victim of spousal violence, nearly five times higher than the proportion of women who did not drink heavily (6%^E).

Although estimates by gender were not releasable for alcohol use and non-spousal violence, heavy drinkers were more than three times as likely as other individuals to report being a victim of non-spousal violence (353^E versus 106^E incidents per 1,000 population).

Similar to the provinces, women who used drugs were also more likely than non-drug users to report being a victim of spousal violence (25%^E versus 8%^E). For non-spousal violence, women who used drugs had a victimization rate almost seven times higher than the rate of those who did not.

Social disorder increases risk of spousal and non-spousal victimization

Few community factors that were analyzed increased the risk of violent victimization in the territories.³² Social disorder was one community factor linked to victimization. Individuals, both women and men, who lived in a neighbourhood with at least one indicator of social disorder were more likely than others³³ to be a victim of spousal violence (10% versus 3%). Similarly, they were more likely to be victimized by someone other than a spouse (329^E versus 73^E incidents per 1,000 population).

Sense of belonging was another community factor linked to risk, but only for non-spousal violence. Although estimates were not releasable by gender, individuals with a weak sense of belonging to their community had a higher risk of non-spousal victimization.

Summary

The likelihood of being violently victimized is not equal among all groups of women, but rather differs based on socio-demographic, lifestyle behaviours, and community characteristics, as well as other life events (experiences of emotional and financial spousal abuse). Using both police-reported and self-reported victimization data, this section identified several factors that raise a woman's risk of violent victimization.

Police-reported findings indicate that young women are the most-at-risk group of women, a finding consistent with earlier research. The only exception to this pattern was women in dating relationships, where risk was highest among those in their late 20s and early 30s. Rates of police-reported violence were also elevated among those living in non-census metropolitan areas, while homicide data indicate that Aboriginal women were disproportionately victims of homicide.

Some of these factors, namely age and Aboriginal identity, were also related to risk of self-reported violent victimization. In addition, for spousal victimization overall, risk was heightened for women who had an activity limitation and were emotionally and/or financially abused by a spouse. These two factors, along with age, were independently associated with risk of spousal violence.

A number of factors elevated women's risk of non-spousal violence, including young age, being single, participating in many evening activities, using drugs, being an Aboriginal person, and living in a community characterized by social disorder.

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Notes

^E use with caution

1. For information about methodological differences between the GSS and the UCR surveys, see discussion in the Introduction section.
2. For both self-reported spousal and non-spousal violence, the analysis of risk factors is primarily based on a one-year snapshot, since many of these factors can change over time. The only exceptions are for the following socio-demographic characteristics and life events of spousal violence victims: sexual orientation, presence of an activity limitation, Aboriginal identity, visible minority status, immigrant status, and experiences of emotional and/or financial abuse. Sample counts were too low for these characteristics to be reliably presented for the previous 12 months.
3. Risk factors for victimization seldom exist in isolation. For example, being young is often associated with participating in evening activities, both of which can be risk factors for violent victimization. To evaluate the independent effect of each factor to the risk of victimization, logistic regression modeling techniques were used. By doing so, it was possible to identify factors that independently predict women's risk of self-reported violent victimization, even after controlling for the potential effects of other factors.
4. Intimate partners include legally married, separated, divorced, opposite and same sex common-law, dating partners (current and previous) and other intimate partners.
5. The higher risk of dating violence is despite the fact that the rate of dating violence is underestimated. Underestimation is a result of the inflated size of population used in the calculation of dating violence rates. That is, the calculation of a dating violence rate uses the entire population of unmarried persons, regardless of their dating relationship status.
6. This is because the UCR Survey relationship categories do not match population data.
7. Excludes homicides committed by same-sex spouses, ex-same-sex spouses or separated common-law spouses since there are no population data specifically for these groups.
8. Police services do not consistently report on the Aboriginal identity of victims or accused.
9. Aboriginal identity was known for 55% of spousal homicides, 55% of dating homicides, and 54% of non-intimate partner homicides against women.
10. Based on the 2006 Census, Statistics Canada.
11. The calculation of percentages includes those instances where the Aboriginal identity of the victim was unknown, since it may be more likely that unknown cases of Aboriginal identity may be biased.
12. A CMA (census metropolitan area) consists of one or more neighbouring municipalities situated around a major urban core. A CMA must have a total population of at least 100,000 of which 50,000 or more live in the urban core. To be included in the CMA, other adjacent municipalities must have a high degree of integration with the central urban area, as measured by commuting flows derived from census data. A CMA typically comprises more than one police service.
13. It is not possible to examine census metropolitan area (CMA) rates of spousal and dating violence, since population data for spouses and unmarried persons are not available at the CMA level.
14. More detailed age breakdowns were not possible, due to small samples for detailed age categories and the corresponding high likelihood of sampling error.
15. For spousal violence, prevalence is calculated as the percentage of individuals with a current and/or former spouse who were victimized, while for non-spousal violence, it is calculated as the rate of incidents per 1,000 total population.
16. It is not possible to calculate prevalence of violence by a previous spouse by marital status.

17. In order to release an analysis of the association between sexual orientation and violent victimization by gender with 2009 GSS data, the categories of self-identifying as gay or lesbian and self-identifying as bisexual were combined.
18. Evening activities can include working, attending classes, going to meetings/restaurants/movies/bars/pubs/casinos, participating in sports or recreational activities, shopping, and visiting with friends or family.
19. The GSS asked victims of spousal violence if they had used alcohol or drugs to cope with violence. Due to small counts, this information was not releasable.
20. In the GSS, "drugs" can include illicit drugs and the abuse of solvents and other hazardous substances, but excludes medication taken on a doctor's prescription or bought over-the-counter.
21. Based on results from multivariate analysis.
22. The GSS defines persons with activity limitations as those who reported difficulty in their daily lives or a physical or mental condition or health problem that limited the quantity or type of activities in which they could engage. This is based on the World Health Organization's (WHO) framework definition of disability (See Perreault 2009).
23. This differs from findings from multivariate analysis.
24. According to the 2006 Census, about 2% of women in Canada could not speak English or French. Although the General Social Survey does collect information on the cultural origins of respondents, the sample size is not large enough to calculate reliable estimates by race or cultural background. However, those who identified themselves as a visible minority or an immigrant were not found to be associated with increased levels of spousal violence. Similar findings have been found for victimization in general. It should be noted that despite improvements in the methodology used for interviewing women about violence, surveys are only conducted in Canada's two official languages which may present a barrier to the collection of data from immigrant women.
25. As per Census definitions, visible minorities refer to those who self-identify as belonging to one or more of the following racial or cultural groups: Chinese, South Asian, Black, Filipino, Latin American, Southeast Asian, Arab, West Asian, Korean, Japanese, or another group. Non-visible minorities include single origin White, single origin Aboriginal, and multiple origin White/Latin American and White/Arab-West Asian.
26. For more information on the interconnected issues affecting Aboriginal peoples, see the Royal Commission Report on Aboriginal Peoples (1996). (accessed November 26, 2012).
27. The 2009 GSS measured several indicators of disorder, including, noisy neighbours or loud parties, people hanging around on the streets, people sleeping in public places, garbage or litter lying around, vandalism, graffiti, and other deliberate property damage, people being attacked or harassed because of their skin colour, ethnic origin, or religion, people using or dealing drugs, people being drunk or rowdy in public places, and prostitution.
28. Community factors were only examined for spousal violence by a current spouse in the last 12 months given that women may move neighbourhoods after marital separation. For multivariate analysis, however, the model examining the effects of community factors included victimization by both a current and previous spouse to allow for larger sample size.
29. May contain some cases where respondents did not state whether social disorder was a problem in their neighbourhood.
30. For the territories, given small counts, the analysis of risk factors for spousal violence refers to victimization in the past five years. However, as with the provinces, data for non-spousal violence are only available for the past 12 months. Many findings for spousal and non-spousal victimization in the territories should be used with caution due to small counts. The results are based on descriptive analysis.

31. Unlike other differences, this was only significant at the ($p < 0.10$) level.
32. As with the provinces, community factors were only examined for spousal violence by a current spouse given that women may move neighbourhoods after marital separation.
33. May contain some cases where respondents did not state whether social disorder was a problem in their neighbourhood.

Detailed data tables

Table 2.1

Victims of homicide, by age group and sex of victim and accused-victim relationship, Canada, 2001 to 2011

Age group of victims (years)	Spousal homicide ¹		Dating homicide ²		Non-intimate partner homicide ³	
	Female victims	Male victims	Female victims	Male victims	Female victims	Male victims
	rate per million					
15 to 24	18.8	5.8	2.5	0.3	6.4	35.2
25 to 34	10.3	3.0	3.4	1.4	4.7	25.8
35 to 44	7.5	2.3	4.8	1.3	3.6	20.2
45 to 54	5.5	2.0	3.0	1.6	3.1	15.3
55 to 64	3.0	0.8	1.0	4.7	3.1	11.7
65 years and older	3.7	0.3	0.1	1.6	4.3	8.9

1. Spousal homicide refers to homicide committed by legally married, separated, divorced, and common-law partners. The rate is calculated per million spouses.

2. Dating partner homicide refers to homicide committed by boyfriends/girlfriends (current or previous) and other non-spousal intimate partners. The rate of dating homicide is an underestimation given that the population of unmarried persons (single, divorced and widowed) includes both persons who have engaged in a dating relationship and those who have not recently engaged in a dating relationship. For this table, the separated population has been excluded from the unmarried population. This is because prior to 2007, the separated population was combined with the legally married population. The rate is calculated per million unmarried persons.

3. Non-intimate partner homicide refers to homicide committed by other family members (parents, children, siblings, extended family members), friends, casual acquaintances, neighbours, authority figures, criminal relationships, business relationships, strangers and others.

Note: Includes population aged 15 years and over. Population estimates based upon July 1st estimates from Statistics Canada, Demography Division. Excludes incidents where the age, sex, and/or relationship to the accused of the victim was unknown.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.

Table 2.2

Victims of homicide, by sex of the victim, accused relationship to victim, and Aboriginal identity, Canada, 2001 to 2011

Aboriginal identity	Sex of victim				Total	
	Female		Male			
	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent
Spousal homicide						
Non-Aboriginal person	330	52	49	30	379	47
Aboriginal person	23	4	34	21	57	7
Unknown ¹	284	45	81	49	365	46
Dating homicide						
Non-Aboriginal person	61	42	32	46	93	43
Aboriginal person	16	11	6	9	22	10
Unknown ¹	67	47	32	46	99	46
Non-intimate partner homicide						
Non-Aboriginal person	365	45	1,271	41	1,636	41
Aboriginal person	79	10	338	11	417	11
Unknown ¹	376	46	1,521	49	1,867	48

1. Since it may be more likely that unknown cases of Aboriginal identity may be biased, these are included in the total calculated for percentages. Many police services, including the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Toronto Police Service, do not collect information on Aboriginal identity of homicide victims.

Note: Includes only those aged 15 years and older. Excludes incidents where the age and/or sex of the victim was unknown.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.

Table 2.3

Self-reported spousal violence victimization in the past 12 months, by sex of victim and victim socio-demographic characteristics, Canada, 2009

Socio-demographic characteristic	Sex of victim			
	Female		Male	
	number ('000)	percent	number ('000)	percent
Age group (years)				
15 to 34†	70 ^E	3.4 ^E	63 ^E	3.7 ^E
35 and over	109	1.5*	93	1.2*
Number of evening activities (per month)				
Less than 10	35 ^E	1.3 ^{E*}	11 ^E	0.5 ^{E*}
10 to 19	48 ^E	1.9 ^E	26 ^E	1.1 ^E
20 to 29	27 ^E	1.5 ^{E*}	64 ^E	3.0 ^E
30 or more†	68 ^E	3.1 ^E	49 ^E	1.8 ^E
Highest level of education attained by victim				
Secondary or less	53 ^E	2.1 ^E	33 ^E	1.2 ^E
Post-secondary†	126	1.9	123	1.8
Household income				
Less than \$30,000†	27 ^E	2.9 ^E	F	F
\$30,000 to \$59,999	52 ^E	2.5 ^E	32 ^E	1.8 ^E
\$60,000 or more	84	1.8	91	1.6
Not stated/don't know	F	F	F	F
Main activity				
Working at paid job or business†	125	2.3	130	1.8
Looking for paid work	F	F	F	F
Going to school	F	F	F	F
Household work ¹	22 ^E	1.2 ^{E*}	F	F
Retired	F	F	F	F
Other ²	F	F	F	F
Five or more alcoholic drinks in one sitting (past month)				
No† ³	135	1.7	85 ^E	1.3 ^E
At least once	41 ^E	2.8 ^E	69 ^E	2.2 ^E
Drug use				
Used drugs	38 ^E	5.4 ^{E*}	54 ^E	5.1 ^{E*}
Never used drugs†	139	1.6	98	1.2
Total	178	1.9	155	1.6

^E use with caution

F too unreliable to be published

† reference category

* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

1. Includes taking care of children and maternity/paternity leave.

2. Includes long-term illness and volunteering.

3. Includes those who did not drink 5 or more alcoholic drinks in one sitting in the past month, those who did not drink in the past month, and those who never drink.

Note: Responses of 'Don't know' and 'Not stated' are not listed. Data from the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut were collected using a different methodology and are therefore excluded.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2009.

Table 2.4

Self-reported non-spousal violence victimization in the past 12 months, by sex of victim, victim socio-demographic and lifestyle characteristics, Canada, 2009

Selected characteristic	Sex of victim				Total	
	Female		Male			
	number ('000)	rate	number ('000)	rate	number ('000)	rate
Age group (years)						
15 to 34†	765	171	1,043	226	1,808	199
35 and over	472	50*	413	46*	885	48*
Sexual orientation¹						
Heterosexual†	939	74	1,095	89	2,034	81
Gay or lesbian or bisexual	F	F	F	F	210 ^E	394 ^{E*}
Don't know/not stated	F	F	F	F	F	F
Number of evening activities (per month)						
Less than 10	128	31*	113 ^E	42 ^{E*}	240	35*
10 to 19	201	61*	187 ^E	61 ^{E*}	387	61*
20 to 29	258	98*	276	96*	534	97*
30 or more†	639	170	871	182	1,510	177
Highest level of education attained by victim						
Secondary or less	443	100	559	124	1,002	112
Post-secondary†	794	84	890	99	1,684	91
Household income						
Less than \$30,000†	153	82	121 ^E	109 ^E	275	92
\$30,000 to \$59,999	236	79	237	92	473	85
\$60,000 or more	582	98	815	109	1,397	104
Don't know/not stated	266	83	282	113	548	97
Main activity						
Working at paid job or business†	684	98	876	97	1,560	98
Looking for paid work	F	F	F	F	85 ^E	147 ^E
Going to school	354	204*	428	266*	781	234*
Household work ²	116 ^E	57 ^{E*}	F	F	126 ^E	57 ^{E*}
Retired	F	F	30 ^E	14 ^{E*}	64 ^E	14 ^{E*}
Other ³	F	F	F	F	69 ^E	88 ^E

See notes at the end of the table.

Table 2.4 (continued)

Self-reported non-spousal violence victimization in the past 12 months, by sex of victim, victim socio-demographic and lifestyle characteristics, Canada, 2009

Selected characteristic	Sex of victim				Total	
	Female		Male			
	number ('000)	rate	number ('000)	rate	number ('000)	rate
Five or more alcoholic drinks in one sitting (past month)						
No† ⁴	773	68	659	77	1,431	72
At least once	455	185*	778	159*	1,234	168*
Drug use						
Used drugs	378	285*	574	272*	952	277*
Never used drugs†	855	68	862	75	1,717	71
Activity limitation						
Activity limitation	500	107	446	112	946	109
No activity limitation†	735	79	1,003	104	1,737	92
Immigrant status						
Immigrant	F	F	160 ^E	57 ^{E*}	276 ^E	48 ^{E*}
Non-immigrant†	1,119	101	1,296	120	2,415	110
Visible minority status						
Visible minority	F	F	131 ^E	73 ^{E*}	233 ^E	63 ^{E*}
Non-visible minority†	1,132	94	1,302	111	2,434	103
Aboriginal identity						
Aboriginal person	110 ^E	223 ^{E*}	63 ^E	165 ^E	174	198*
Non-Aboriginal person†	1,122	84	1,380	105	2,502	94
Total	1,237	88	1,456	107	2,693	97

^E use with caution

F too unreliable to be published

† reference category

* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

1. Sexual orientation is only asked of respondents aged 18 or more.

2. Includes taking care of children and maternity/paternity leave.

3. Includes long-term illness and volunteering.

4. Includes those who did not drink 5 or more alcoholic drinks in one sitting in the past month, those who did not drink in the past month, and those who never drink.

Note: Rates are calculated per 1,000 population aged 15 years and older. Data from the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut were collected using a different methodology and are therefore excluded.**Source:** Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2009.

Table 2.5

Self-reported spousal violence victimization in the past 5 years, by sex of victim and selected victim socio-demographic characteristics, Canada, 2009

Selected characteristic	Sex of victim				Total	
	Female		Male			
	number ('000)	percent	number ('000)	percent	number ('000)	percent
Sexual orientation¹						
Heterosexual†	551	6.1	555	5.9	1,105	6.0
Gay or lesbian or bisexual	36 ^E	20.8 ^{E*}	F	F	61 ^E	20.2 ^{E*}
Don't know/not stated	F	F	F	F	F	F
Activity limitation						
Activity limitation	275	9.3*	180	6.1	454	7.7*
No activity limitation†	323	5.0	402	6.0	726	5.5
Immigrant status						
Immigrant	100	4.9*	86 ^E	3.9 ^{E*}	185	4.4*
Non-immigrant†	498	6.8	497	6.6	996	6.7
Visible minority status						
Visible minority	77 ^E	6.9 ^E	36 ^E	3.2 ^{E*}	113	5.0
Non-visible minority†	514	6.3	542	6.4	1,056	6.4
Aboriginal identity						
Aboriginal person	48 ^E	15.4 ^{E*}	7 ^E	F	55	9.6*
Non-Aboriginal person†	546	6.0	573	6.1	1,119	6.1
Total	601	6.4	585	6.0	1,186	6.2

^E use with caution

F too unreliable to be published

† reference category

* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

1. Sexual orientation is only asked of respondents aged 18 or more.

Note: Data from the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut were collected using a different methodology and are therefore excluded.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2009.

Table 2.6

Self-reported non-spousal violence victimization in the past 12 months, by sex of victim and community factors, Canada, 2009

Community factors, Canada, 2009

Community factor	Sex of victim				Total	
	Female		Male			
	number ('000)	rate	number ('000)	rate	number ('000)	rate
Knowing people in the neighbourhood						
Know most or many people	612	92	724	113	1,336	102
Know a few or no people†	625	85	730	101	1,355	93
Overall sense of belonging						
Strong†	827	79	938	91	1,766	85
Weak	406	127*	502	160*	909	144*
Neighbours help each other						
Yes†	908	78	1,082	94	1,990	86
No	318	166*	346	200*	664	182*
Total	1,237	88	1,456	107	2,693	97

† reference category

* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

Note: Rates are calculated per 1,000 population aged 15 and over. Data from the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut were collected using a different methodology and are therefore excluded.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2009.

Section 3: Impact of violence against women

By Hope Hutchins and Maire Sinha

Violence against women can have a myriad of devastating consequences on women's short and long-term health and wellbeing. Along with the immediate physical and emotional impacts of violence, women's overall quality of life can be adversely affected over an entire lifetime, which can, in turn, impact their participation and engagement in various aspects of life and society (Johnson et al. 2008). These consequences to the individual women, along with the violent act itself, can have ripple effects on society as a whole (World Health Organization 2011). For instance, employers may experience lost productivity and output from their employees, while women's informal support networks, such as families and friends, may need to alter their daily activities to provide assistance to victims (Reeves and O'Leary-Kelly 2007, AuCoin and Beauchamp 2007). This is in addition to the broader societal costs associated with delivering and maintaining health care, social and justice-related services to victims of violent crime, as well as the costs related to the criminal justice response to accused persons (Johnson and Dawson 2011).

Using data from the 2009 General Social Survey (GSS) on victimization, this section examines four major dimensions on the impact of violence against women: self-perceived safety, health and well-being; emotional impacts; physical consequences; and societal impacts. The impact of both self-reported spousal and non-spousal violence is discussed.¹ Also, the text box on the economic costs of spousal violence presents findings from a study conducted by the Department of Justice.

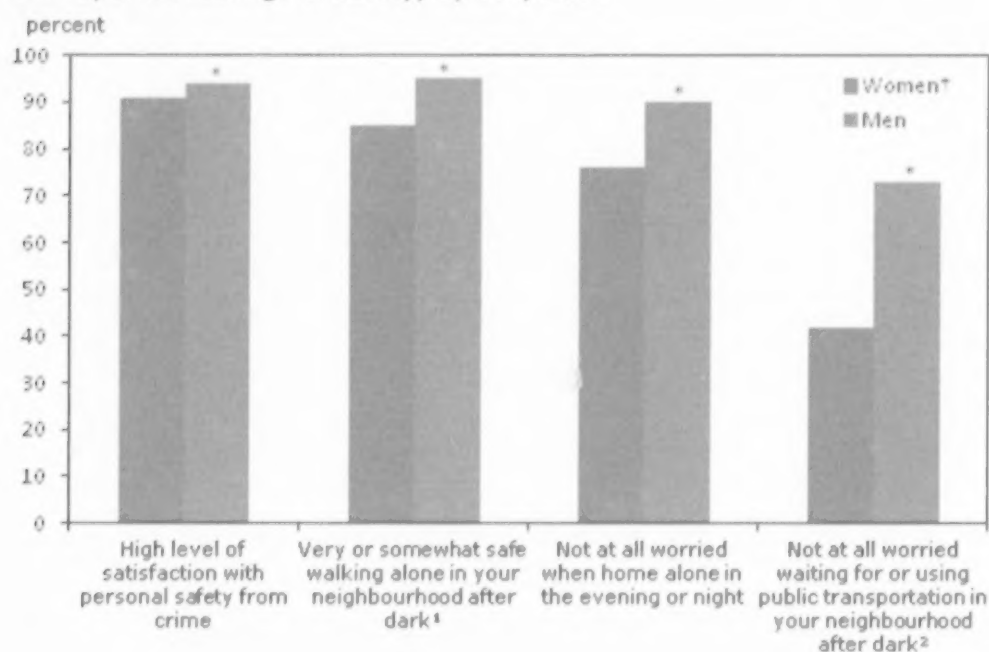
Self-perceived safety, health and well-being²

Women generally more likely than men to be fearful of crime

The effects of violent crime on women in general can be far-reaching. Indirect exposure to violent crime can remind others in the community of their potential risk of victimization, which in turn, increases overall levels of fear (Johnson and Dawson 2011). In 2009, the GSS asked Canadians about their feelings of personal safety from crime.

While women reported overall high levels of satisfaction with their personal safety from crime, these levels were significantly lower than those of men (91% versus 94%). Women were also found to be less likely than men to feel safe in a variety of situations, including walking alone at night in their neighbourhoods (85% versus 95%), being home alone in the evening (76% versus 90%), and using or waiting for public transportation alone after dark (42% versus 73%) (Chart 3.1).

Chart 3.1
Self-reported feelings of safety, by sex, 2009



† reference category

* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

1. Excludes those that stated that they do not or never walk alone in their neighbourhood after dark.

2. Excludes those living in cities or communities without public transportation and those who never use public transportation after dark.

Note: Excludes data from the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2009.

Female victims of non-spousal violence less likely than other women to feel safe

Feelings of safety from crime can be influenced by experiences of victimization. According to victimization data, the impact of victimization on women's levels of fear generally depended on the female victim's relationship to the perpetrator. That is, women victimized by their spouse in the last 12 months generally did not have increased levels of fear of crime compared to those women not victimized. In contrast, women victimized by someone other than their spouse were more fearful of crime. This finding is not unexpected, as fear of crime is often related to the threat of stranger violence and not the threat from family members (Scott 2003).

In particular, female victims of spousal violence were equally as likely as non-victimized women to feel satisfied with their personal safety (89% and 91%) (Table 3.1). They also did not have increased levels of fear walking alone after dark or using public transit, compared to women not violently victimized. However, spousal violence victims had heightened levels of fear being home alone. Over one-third (35%) of female spousal victims felt worried when home alone in the evening or night, compared to 23% of women not victimized in the last 12 months.

Across all activities, women victimized by someone other than a spouse were significantly more fearful than women not victimized in the previous 12 months (Table 3.1). For example, almost three-quarters (72%) of female victims of non-spousal violence were worried while waiting for or using public transit after dark, higher than the proportion of women who did not report experiencing any type of violence (56%).³ Further, while 25% of women victimized outside of a spousal relationship felt unsafe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark, the same was true for 14% of women not victimized in the preceding 12 months.

Female victims more likely than male victims to be fearful

In general, female victims of spousal and non-spousal violence were significantly less likely to report feeling safe compared to male victims (Table 3.1). Similar to women, experiences of spousal violence had little influence on men's perception of safety, as men victimized by a spouse were just as likely as those not victimized to feel safe from crime. Unlike female spousal violence victims, male spousal violence victims were not more likely than male non-victims to be fearful while home alone after dark. Mirroring patterns for women, men who were victimized by someone other than a spouse consistently felt less safe than other men.

Women victimized by a spouse more likely than other women to negatively evaluate their physical health

Violent victimization can influence women's overall perception of health, which can reflect women's general health status (Turcotte 2011). Based on victimization data, however, victims were not less likely than others to positively evaluate their health. In 2009, 54% of women victimized by a spouse within the last year reported very good or excellent health, a proportion not statistically different from the proportions of women victimized by someone other than a spouse (58%), as well as women not victimized (62%) (Table 3.2).

While ranking of physical health was not significantly lower among women victimized by a spouse over the previous 12 months, a difference in physical health ratings emerged when examining women victimized by a spouse over a five-year period.⁴ In particular, women who reported spousal violence over this longer period were less likely than other women (including both victims of non-spousal violence and non-victims) to describe their physical health as very good or excellent (55% versus 62%) and more likely to report fair or poor health (17% versus 13%).

Experiences of spousal and non-spousal violence were not linked to poorer perceptions of physical health for men. That is, male victims did not differ in their evaluation of physical health from male non-victims.

Self-rated mental health lower among victims of violence

Women's perception of their mental health was consistently lower when they reported being violently victimized, regardless of their relationship to the perpetrator. Positive assessments of mental health, namely reporting that mental health was very good or excellent, were lowest among female victims of spousal violence (52%) (Table 3.2). This was followed by female victims of non-spousal violence (65%) and females not victimized in the last 12 months (73%). Unlike female victims, men's assessment of their own mental health did not vary by whether or not they had been violently victimized.

Elevated levels of everyday stress were much more common among victims of violence. Again, women victimized by their spouse were the most likely to report that most of their days were "quite a bit or extremely stressful" (53%) (Table 3.2). This proportion was significantly higher than for female victims of non-spousal violence (41%) and more than double the proportion of women not victimized in the last 12 months (23%). Men were generally less likely than women to experience high levels of daily stress, but also were more likely to describe high levels of stress if they had been a victim of violent victimization.

Life satisfaction lower among victims

Life satisfaction is a personal, subjective evaluation of overall well-being. According to the 2009 GSS, women's satisfaction was related to their experiences of victimization. Similar to ratings of mental health and stress, women reporting the lowest levels of life satisfaction were those who had been victimized in the previous year. In 2009, 76% of female victims of spousal violence and 85% of female victims of non-spousal violence indicated that they were satisfied with their lives, compared to 92% for women not reporting any type of violence (Table 3.2). For both spousal and non-spousal violence, the proportions of female and male victims reporting being satisfied with their lives were similar.

Emotional impacts of violent victimization

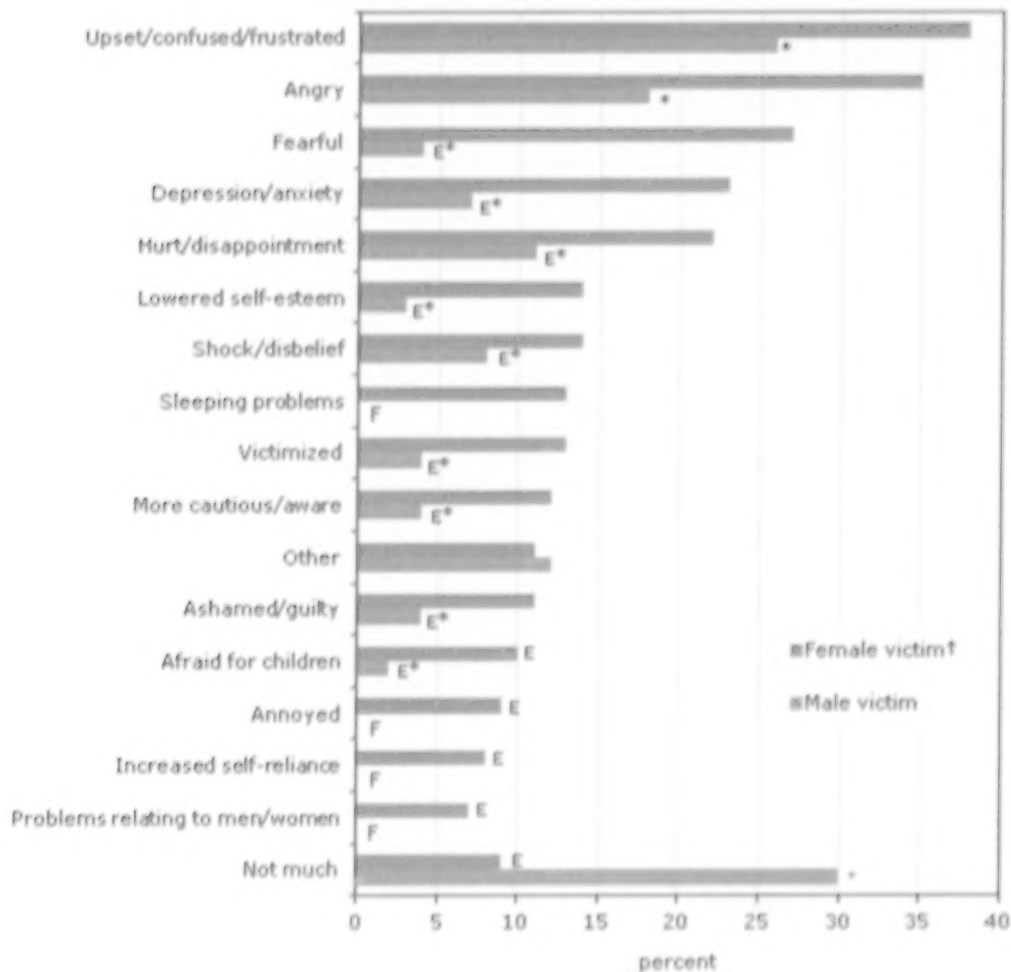
Female victims of spousal violence more likely than male victims to be fearful and depressed

The experiences of being a victim of violent victimization can elicit a range of emotional impacts. Overall, female victims were much more likely than men to report being emotionally affected as a result of the victimization. In 2009, about nine in ten female victims of spousal violence (89%) indicated that the violence had some emotional impact on them, while the same was true for about seven in ten male victims of spousal violence (66%).

The most common impact of spousal violence on women was being upset, confused or frustrated (38%), closely followed by being angry (35%) (Chart 3.2). While these were also the most frequently reported types of negative consequences for male victims, female victims were much more likely to report these and other responses to violence. For instance, women were seven times as likely as men to be fearful (27% versus 4%^E), three times as likely to be depressed or anxious (23% versus 7%^E), and twice as likely to be angry (35% versus 18%). Inversely, men more often reported that the victimization had not had much of an effect on them (30% versus 9%^E of women).

The consequences of non-spousal violence parallel those for spousal violence. One-third of women (34%) were left feeling angry, 28% were upset, confused or frustrated, and 27% expressed fear. Again, gender differences emerged in the type of emotional responses, though notably, women and men were about equally as likely to feel angry about the non-spousal violent incident (34% and 31%).

Chart 3.2
Emotional consequences of spousal violence, by sex of victim, Canada, 2009



* use with caution

† reference category

* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

Note: Refers to spousal violence in the previous five years. Excludes data from the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2009.

Emotional impacts much higher for severe forms of violence

A larger proportion of women who experienced the most serious forms of spousal violence, such as being beaten, stated that they had an emotional response (95%) compared to those who experienced less serious forms, such as being pushed, slapped, or kicked (85%). Overall, emotional consequences were more likely when women sustained physical injury. According to victimization data, 95% of female spousal violence victims who sustained injury reported an emotional consequence to the victimization, compared to 84% of non-injured female spousal victims.

As with spousal violence, non-spousal violent incidents with physical injury were more likely than those without injury to elicit an emotional response. In particular, a larger proportion of injured female victims were emotionally affected relative to non-injured female victims (96% versus 87% of incidents).

Emotional impacts most common among female robbery victims

Not all forms of non-spousal violence elicit emotional responses to violence. Among women, robbery victims were most emotionally affected by their victimization, as nearly all robbery incidents left female victims with some type of emotional impact. In comparison, 87% of physical assault incidents and 87% of sexual assault incidents elicited an emotional response. There was no difference in emotional impacts by type of victimization among male victims of non-spousal violence.

Use of anti-depressant medication higher among victims

Women have different strategies for coping with violent experiences. While most turn to informal sources of support, such as family or friends (see Section 4), research has also found that self-medicating is one method used by some women to deal with their victimization (Johnson and Dawson 2011). This behaviour may also be an indicator of the degree of the emotional impact of violence (Johnson et al. 2008).

According to the 2009 GSS, medication use for depression, anxiety and sleep problems was significantly higher among female victims of violence in the previous 12 months. More than one-quarter of spousal violence victims (27%) and non-spousal violence victims (26%) used medication to cope with depression, to calm them down or to help them sleep. These proportions were significantly higher than the proportion of women who were not violently victimized (18%). It was also significantly higher than the share of male victims who used medication (14%).

Unlike women, men's use of medication did not vary significantly by whether or not they were violently victimized (14% versus 12%). While the GSS also asked victims of violence about their use of alcohol and drugs to cope with the violent incidents, sample counts were too low to produce statistically reliable results.

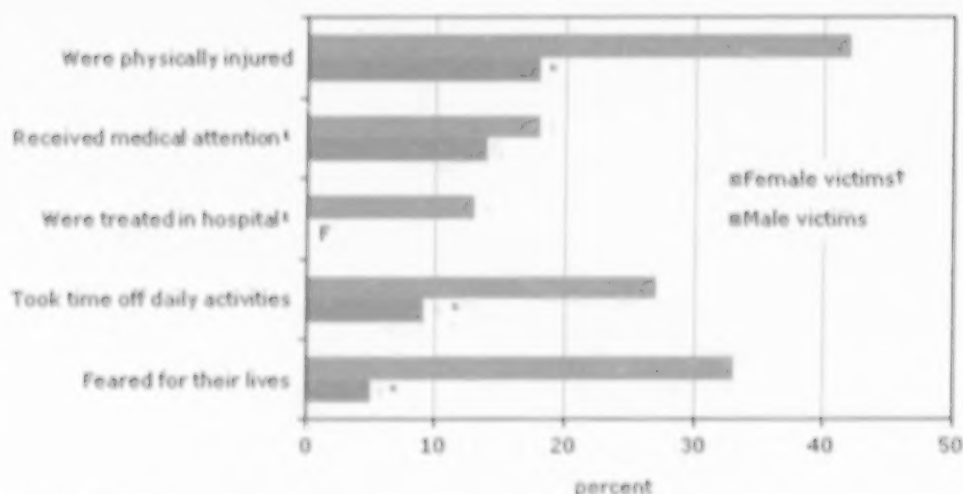
Physical consequences of violence against women

Four in ten female victims of spousal violence were physically injured

Four in ten women (42%) victimized by their spouse in the previous five years reported being physically injured (Chart 3.3). This was more than double the proportion of male victims (18%). The most common types of injury reported by women who were physically injured were bruises (95%), followed by cuts, scratches or burns (30%). Less frequently reported were fractures or broken bones (9%^E) and internal injuries or miscarriage (9%^E combined).

Chart 3.3

Impact of spousal violence for victims, by sex of victim, Canada, 2009



* use with caution

F too unreliable to be published

† reference category

* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

‡ Includes only those who were physically injured.

Note: Refers to spousal violence in the previous five years. Excludes data from the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut.**Source:** Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2009.

Sometimes, injuries to spousal violence victims were so severe that medical attention was required. According to the 2009 GSS, 18%^F of injured women required medical attention and 13%^F were treated in a hospital or health care centre (Chart 3.3). In some instances, injuries to women resulted in disruptions to their daily lives, as 40% of injured women reported taking time off from everyday activities. A disruption in daily activities was not limited to injured victims. About one in five non-injured women (17%) also had to take time off from their daily activities as a result of the spousal violence.

Overall, female victims of spousal violence were three times more likely than their male counterparts to experience disruptions to their daily lives as a result of the incident (27% versus 9%^F) (Chart 3.3). They were also much more likely than male victims to state that they feared for their life (33% versus 5%^F).

Among incidents outside of a spousal relationship, gender differences tended to be less pronounced. In 2009, 17% of non-spousal violent incidents resulted in the female victim being physically injured, a proportion not significantly different from that of males (18%). Among those incidents against women resulting in physical injury, 21%^F required medical attention, similar to the percentage of incidents against male victims (16%^F). However, similar to spousal violence, female victims of non-spousal violence were much more likely than male victims to state that they found it difficult or impossible to carry out their everyday activities (40% versus 17%).

Text box 3.1

Impact of violent victimization on Aboriginal women

While Aboriginal women have a higher prevalence of self-reported violent victimization (see Section 1), the emotional consequences were, in some ways, similar to non-Aboriginal women. Among spousal violence victims, a similar proportion of Aboriginal women and non-Aboriginal women reported having an emotional response to their victimization (90% and 89%). This is despite the fact that the physical consequences of spousal violence were heightened for Aboriginal women.

Specifically, Aboriginal women victimized by a spouse in the previous five years were significantly more likely than their non-Aboriginal female counterparts to report being physically injured (59% versus 41%). They were also more likely to report fearing for their lives (52%^E versus 31%), though they were as likely as non-Aboriginal female victims to take time off from everyday activities (33%^E and 27%).

For non-spousal violence, Aboriginal women were more likely than non-Aboriginal women to have an emotional response. In particular, 96% of non-spousal violent incidents against Aboriginal women resulted in victims reporting an emotional impact, compared to 88% of incidents involving non-Aboriginal women. The physical impact of non-spousal victimization was similar between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women.

Text box 3.2

Physical impact of police-reported violence against women, 2011

In addition to using victimization data, the physical impact of violence against women can be measured using police-reported data, namely the Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Survey. These data are based on crimes that have been reported to and substantiated by police. According to police-reported data for 2011, four in ten (41%) female victims had been physically injured as a result of police-reported violence, similar to the share of male victims who were injured (46%). For some violent crimes, women were more likely than men to sustain injury, such as sexual violence (25% versus 15%) and deprivation of freedom offences, such as forcible confinement and abduction (55% versus 45%). Men, on the other hand, were more likely than women to be injured for the offences of attempted murder (85% versus 80%) and robbery (37% versus 26%). In general, injuries sustained by women and men were minor in nature.

Females victimized by intimate partners more often injured

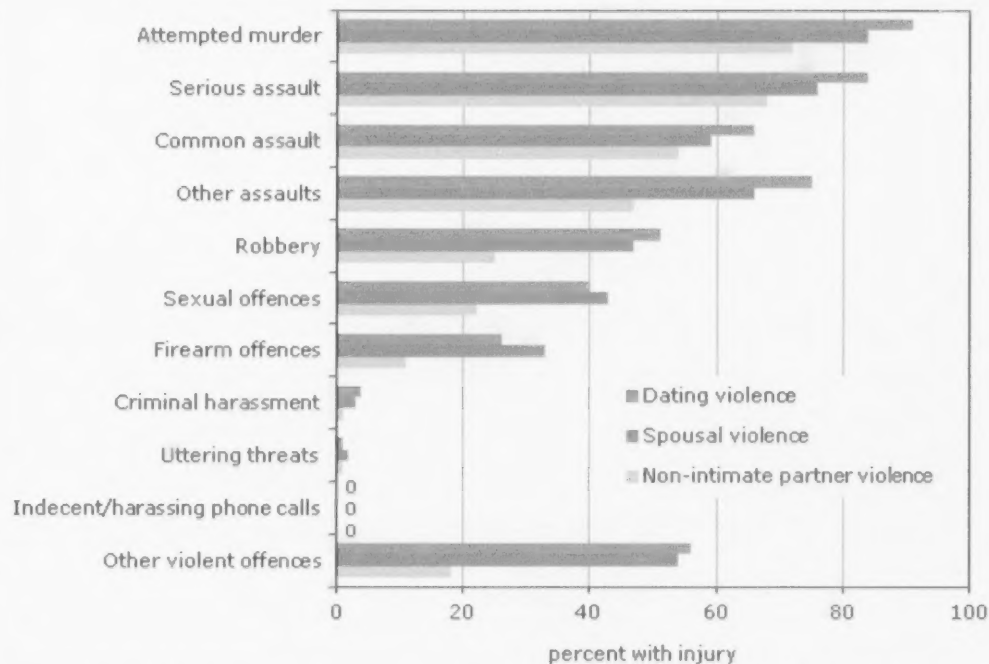
The likelihood of injury varied based on the woman's relationship to the accused. As was also the case for male victims, female victims of police-reported violence were more likely to sustain physical injury when the perpetrator was either a spouse (49%) or dating partner (53%), than when the accused was a non-spousal family member, friend, acquaintance or stranger (33%). This was true regardless of the type of offence (Text box 3.2 chart).

Text box 3.2 (continued)

Physical impact of police-reported violence against women, 2011

Text box 3.2 chart

Female victims of police-reported violent crime, by incidence of injury, relationship of accused to victim and type of offence, 2011



Note: Other violent offences includes abduction, kidnapping, hostage-taking, arson and other violent violations. Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

Injuries most often caused by physical force

Physical force, rather than weapons, was more often used to cause or threaten injury to female victims of police-reported violent crime. In 2011, 87% of female victims injured were harmed by physical force, such as being punched or kicked. Knives or other cutting instruments caused the injury in 3% of female victims, blunt instruments in 2% of victims, and other weapons in 9%.

Societal impacts of violence against women

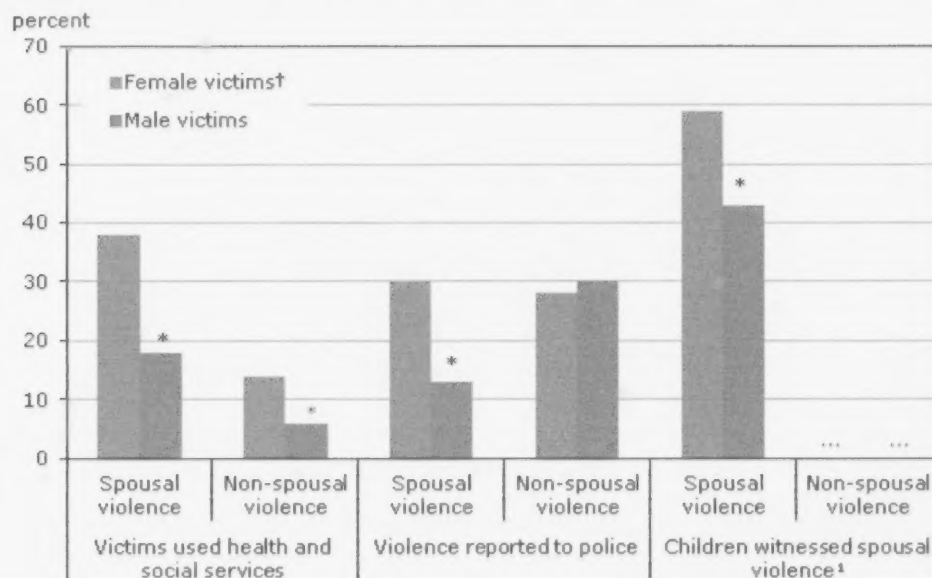
Violence against women has a greater impact on formal social services than violent victimization of men

Family and friends of the victim, who are a source of informal support, may be adversely affected, as their daily activities may be altered or disrupted to provide some form of assistance to the victim (AuCoin and Beauchamp 2007). In 2009, 76% of female victims of spousal violence confided in family, friends, or neighbours. Similarly, in 87% of incidents of non-spousal violence against women, victims disclosed their victimization to such individuals.

Additional societal costs arise from helping victims and their families in terms of the delivery and maintenance of health care services, counselling, shelter services and other social supports. Based on victimization data, the involvement of health and social service agencies was about two to three times higher in incidents of violence against women (both spousal and non-spousal), compared to violent incidents directed at men (Chart 3.4) (Section 4 on Responses to violence against women explores this issue in greater detail). This may partly reflect differences in the severity of violence against women and men.

Chart 3.4

Societal impacts of self-reported violent victimization, by sex of victim and type of violent victimization, Canada, 2009



... not applicable

† reference category

* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$).

1. Includes only spousal violence victims with one or more child(ren). Excludes a small number of cases where the victim reported being a victim of spousal violence by both a current and previous spouse.

Note: Spousal violence refers to spousal violence in the previous five years. Non-spousal violence refers to violence in the previous 12 months. Excludes data from the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2009.

The criminal justice system is also affected by the volume of violent criminal incidents coming to the attention of police. While the reporting of spousal violence against women has declined from 36% in 2004 to 30% in 2009, spousal violence against women was still more likely than spousal violence against men to be reported to police (30% versus 13%). Incidents of non-spousal violence against women were about equally as likely to come to the attention of police as those against men (28% and 30%).

Children more often witnesses to spousal violence against their mother

Children, in particular, can be direct witnesses to spousal violence. For children, especially the very young, this exposure to violence can have long-term emotional, cognitive, social and behavioural impacts, thereby, incurring costs to the social and criminal justice systems for years to come (Holt et al. 2008, Kitzmann et al. 2003).

In addition, witnessing violence against a parent, which is considered a form of maltreatment by provincial and territorial child welfare legislation, can generate the immediate involvement of provincial and territorial child welfare/children's aid or child protection systems. These authorities have the responsibility of investigating possible cases of child exposure to spousal violence, providing necessary services and possibly removing children from the violent household⁵ (Trocmé et al. 2010).

The 2009 GSS asked spousal violence victims if their children heard or saw the violent incidents against them.⁶ As described in Section 1, children were more often present in spousal violence incidents against their mothers than fathers (59% versus 43%) (Chart 3.4) and this violence witnessed by children tended to be more severe when perpetrated against mothers.

Reflecting the heightened severity of spousal violence against women, incidents of spousal violence against mothers were linked to higher levels of spousal victim's contact with formal social services (56% versus 33%^E). Similarly, police involvement was more common when the spousal victim was the child's mother, as opposed to the child's father (48% versus 25%^E).

Text box 3.3

Impact of self-reported violence in the territories, 2009

Women's non-spousal victimization experiences linked to higher levels of fear

Victimization data for the territories⁷ were collected using a different methodology. As a result, analysis of the impact of self-reported violence in the territories is examined separately from the provinces.

Similar to provincial findings, the influence of victimization on fear levels depended on the female victim's relationship to the perpetrator. More specifically, there was no difference in levels of satisfaction with personal safety between women victimized by their spouse and those not violently victimized in the previous 12 months. This finding contrasts with women victimized by someone other than a spouse, where female victims of non-spousal violence were less likely to report feeling safe from crime, compared to both female spousal violence victims and non-victims (71% versus 95% and 92%).

While women in the territories are generally more fearful of crime than men, female spousal violence victims in the territories were more likely than their male counterparts to be satisfied with their personal safety (95% versus 65%^E). The opposite was true for non-spousal victims, where female victims were less likely than male victims to have confidence in their personal safety (71% versus 91%).

Mental well-being lower among female victims than female non-victims

In general, perceptions of physical and mental health were lower among victims of violent crime in the territories. While counts were too small to produce statistically reliable estimates of spousal violence victims' health by gender, spousal victims were overall less likely to describe their physical or mental health in positive terms compared to individuals not violently victimized.

Violent victimization outside of spousal relationships also influenced individuals' rating of their physical health, as well as mental health. In particular, women violently victimized by someone other than a spouse were about half as likely (31%^E) as women not violently victimized (61%) to positively rate their physical health. Further, 44%^E of women victimized by someone other than their spouse described their mental health as very good or excellent, compared to 66% of women not victimized in the previous 12 months. Lower perceptions of mental health, but not physical health, were also evident among male victims of non-spousal violence.

Victimized women in the territories were also less likely than non-victimized women to report being satisfied with their lives. This was true regardless of whether women were victimized by a spouse or another type of perpetrator. Men who were victimized were also less likely than non-victims to be satisfied with their lives.

Text box 3.3 (continued)

Impact of self-reported violence in the territories, 2009

Female victims of spousal violence more likely than male victims to be emotionally affected

As in the provinces, female spousal violence victims living in the territories were more likely than their male counterparts to be emotionally affected by their violent victimization (95% versus 65%^E). The most common emotional consequences expressed by female spousal victims in the territories were being upset, confused, or frustrated (33%^E), being angry (32%^E), and feeling hurt or disappointed (25%^E).

The severity of the spousal violence was not linked to emotional distress among female victims in the territories. Women who experienced the most serious forms of spousal violence were as likely as those who experienced less severe acts of spousal violence to be emotionally affected. In the same vein, there was no difference in emotional impacts between female spousal victims who sustained physical injury and those that did not. The counts for non-spousal violence were too small to produce reliable estimates of emotional consequences by injury.

Half of female victims of spousal violence in the territories were physically injured

In the territories, a fear for life was a predominant reality for female victims of spousal violence, as approximately half (51%^E) believed that their lives were in danger. In addition, about half (49%^E) of female spousal victims sustained physical injuries, a proportion similar to that of male victims. Medical attention was required for about 41%^E of injured women and hospitalization for 38%^E.

Taking time away from daily activities was required for some female spousal victims in the territories. In 2009, over one-third (37%^E) of female spousal violence victims reported a disruption in their day-to-day activities.

Differing from spousal violence, most incidents of non-spousal violence against women did not result in physical injuries. Nearly two-thirds (65%) of non-spousal violence incidents against women did not result in injuries, similar to the proportion involving male victims (63%).

Use of informal support networks higher for female spousal victims than male victims

As with the provinces, the societal level costs of violent victimization in the territories includes burdens placed on individual's informal support networks, along with the supply and maintenance of social and criminal justice services. According to victimization data, 84% of female spousal victims in the territories talked to family, friends or neighbours about the incident, a proportion much greater than for their male counterparts (50%^E). This same gendered pattern was not evident for non-spousal violence. In 70% of incidents of non-spousal violence against women, victims confided in family, friends or neighbours, compared to 81% of incidents involving male victims.

In the territories, there was no significant difference between female and male spousal violence victims in terms of whether the victimization was reported to police (58% versus 44%^E). Although analysis was not releasable for non-spousal violence by gender due to small counts, 32%^E of incidents, whether perpetrated against women or men, came to the attention of police in 2009.

Text box 3.4

Economic costs of violence against women

The financial and economic costs of violence against women can be felt by all sectors of Canadian society. Besides the costs associated with meeting the needs of the victim and offender through social and criminal justice services, financial burdens can be felt by employees and employers with regard to decreased productivity and lost revenue (Day et al. 2005, Government of Manitoba n.d.). This is on top of the direct cost to the victim and their families, who are often faced with loss of earnings and out-of-pocket expenses related to their health and well-being (Day et al. 2005).

While estimating the overall costs of violence against women is an important undertaking, it is fraught with challenges. Determining the costs to be included, the availability of data, differences in measures between available data sources, and the overarching methodological assumptions are just a few of the obstacles facing researchers attempting to estimate the cost of violence against women (Zhang et al. 2013). Despite these challenges, a number of studies have examined the economic impact of violence on victims and Canadian society (Wells et al. 2012, Varcoe et al. 2011). These studies cannot be directly compared because of differing methodologies, and no one study is completely comprehensive.

Most recently, the Department of Justice (Zhang et al. 2013) conducted a study estimating the economic impact of spousal violence occurring in Canada. Overall, the cost of spousal violence to women and men was estimated at \$7.4 billion in 2009. About three-quarters of these costs (74%) were attributed to intangible costs to the victims (e.g., pain and suffering) and their family members (e.g., loss of affection). The study notes that this cost of spousal violence is likely an underestimation given that data were not available in some areas.

The costs were generally higher for spousal violence against women than against men for all categories, with the one exception of acute hospitalization. In total, the cost of spousal violence against women was estimated at \$4.8 billion.

The study classified the economic impact of spousal violence into three groups: direct (primary) victims, third parties (e.g., children and employers) and the justice system (both criminal and civil justice). Of these, the study identified the victim costs as the highest at \$6.0 billion. These costs were associated with mental health counselling expenses, productivity losses at work or school, repairing or replacing damaged property, legal fees for divorce and separation, and intangible costs such as pain and suffering.

The cost borne by third-parties was identified as the next highest at \$889.9 million. Included were costs to the victims' children in terms of missing school days, lost future income, and loss of affection and enjoyment. This category also included reduced output to employers resulting from tardy, distracted, and less productive employees, as well as costs related to operating social services for victims, such as shelters and crisis lines.

At a cost of \$545.2 million, the justice system had the remaining identified costs. Included were costs associated with police, courts, prosecution, legal aid, and corrections, as well as the civil justice costs, including civil protection orders, divorce and separation, and child protection systems.

Summary

This section described some of the direct and indirect impacts of violence against women. Not only do victims suffer emotional and physical harm, but their feelings of safety and perceptions of well-being are often affected by their victimization experiences. While women victimized by a spouse did not consistently have higher levels of fear than other women, women victimized by a stranger, friend, acquaintance or non-spousal family member were less likely than non-victimized women to feel personally safe from crime. Violently victimized women, both those victimized by a spouse or another perpetrator, were less likely to positively rate their mental health, more likely to experience elevated levels of stress, and more likely to use medication for depression, anxiety or sleep problems.

Violence against women also has a range of negative impacts that extend beyond the victim. Family and friends can be indirectly or directly affected by the violence, particularly children who are more often witnesses to spousal violence against their mothers than fathers. In addition, larger societal costs of violence against women can be borne from providing and maintaining social supports and criminal justice services. In general, the use of these services was higher in violence incidents involving female than male victims. It has been suggested that the economic costs associated with providing these services, as well as financial implications of violence to victims and their families are substantial.

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Notes

^E use with caution

1. For the section on self-perceived safety, health and wellbeing, spousal violence includes self-reported victimization by a current or previous spouse in the previous 12 months. Unless otherwise specified, for all other sections, spousal violence refers to spousal victimization in the preceding five years. Non-spousal violence includes victimization in the previous 12 months.
2. Since victimization and measures of safety, health, and life satisfaction were captured at the same time, it is not possible to ascertain whether the individual's well-being preceded or followed the violent victimization.
3. Excludes those living in cities or communities without public transportation and those who never use public transportation after dark.
4. A similar reference period is not possible for non-spousal violence, as Canadians are strictly asked about their non-spousal victimization experiences in the preceding 12 months.
5. Previous studies have shown that in most Canadian provinces and territories, the removal of children who are exposed to family violence often depends on whether there were other forms of maltreatment beyond witnessing violence (Black et al. 2008).
6. Includes spousal violence victims with one or more children.
7. Unlike the analysis of the GSS for the provinces, statistical significant differences for the territories uses a higher p value of $p < 0.1$, in consideration of small sample counts.

Detailed data tables

Table 3.1

Canadians' self-reported feelings of safety from crime, by sex and self-reported victimization experiences, 2009

Feelings of safety from crime	Victims of spousal violence ¹			Victims of non-spousal violence ²			Non-victims [†]		
	Female [†]	Male	Total	Female [†]	Male	Total	Female [†]	Male	Total
	percent								
Personal safety									
Very or somewhat satisfied	89	95	92	87**	92*, **	89**	91	94*	93
Somewhat or very dissatisfied	10 ^E	F	7 ^E	13**	8 ^{E*, **}	10**	7	5*	6
Walking alone after dark in your neighbourhood ³									
Safe	80	96*	88	75**	90*, **	84**	85	95*	91
Unsafe	20 ^E	F	12 ^E	25**	10 ^{E*, **}	16**	14	5*	9
Using or waiting for public transportation alone after dark ⁴									
Not at all worried	36 ^E	74*	57	28 ^{E**}	67*	50**	43	73*	59
Somewhat or very worried	64 ^E	F	43 ^E	72**	32*	50**	56	26*	40
Home alone in the evening or at night ⁵									
Not at all worried	65**	85*	75**	71**	86*, **	79**	77	90*	83
Somewhat or very worried	35**	14 ^{E*}	25**	29**	14*, **	21**	23	9*	16

^E use with caution

F too unreliable to be published

† reference category

* significantly different from reference category, females ($p < 0.05$)

** significantly different from reference category, non-victims ($p < 0.05$)

1. Includes violence against legally married, common-law and same-sex spouses in the previous 12 months.

2. Includes violence against non-spousal family members, friends, acquaintances and strangers in the previous 12 months.

3. Excludes those that stated that they do not or never walk alone in their area after dark.

4. Excludes those living in cities or communities without public transportation and those who never use public transportation after dark.

5. Excludes those who are never alone in their home in the evening or at night.

Note: Responses of 'Don't know' and 'Not stated' are not listed, and therefore, the sum of victims may not add up to the total.

Excludes data from the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2009.

Table 3.2

Canadians' self-perceived health and well-being, by sex and self-reported victimization experiences, 2009

	Victims of spousal violence ¹			Victims of non-spousal violence ²			Non-victims [†]		
Self-perceived health and well-being	Female [†]	Male	Total	Female [†]	Male	Total	Female [†]	Male	Total
	percent								
Physical health									
Excellent or very good	54	57	55	58	63	61	62	63	62
Good	28 ^E	29 ^E	28	25	28	26	25	26	26
Fair or poor	18 ^E	14 ^E	16 ^E	16	9*	12	13	10*	12
Mental health									
Excellent or very good	52**	68*	60**	65**	73*	69**	73	74	73
Good	33**	22 ^E	28	24	20	22	21	21	21
Fair or poor	14 ^{E**}	F	12 ^{E**}	11**	7 ^E	9**	5	4*	5
Level of everyday stress									
Not at all or not very stressful	9 ^{E**}	F	8 ^{E**}	18**	31*, **	25**	34	37*	36
A bit stressful	38	46	41	41	37	38	42	40	41
Quite a bit or extremely stressful	53**	47**	50**	41**	32*, **	36**	23	21*	22
Life satisfaction									
Satisfied	76**	83**	80**	85**	88**	87**	92	93*	92
Dissatisfied	22 ^{E**}	17 ^{E**}	20**	15**	11**	13**	7	6*	6

^E use with caution

F too unreliable to be published

† reference category

* significantly different from reference category, females ($p < 0.05$)

** significantly different from reference category, non-victims ($p < 0.05$)

1. Includes violence against legally married, common-law and same-sex spouses in the previous 12 months.

2. Includes violence against non-spousal family members, friends, acquaintances and strangers in the previous 12 months.

Note: Responses of 'Don't know' and 'Not stated' are not listed, and therefore, the sum of victims may not add up to the total listed. Excludes data from the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2009.

Section 4: Responses to violence against women

By Maire Sinha

Over the past thirty years, the criminal justice system and social intervention response to violence against women has shifted. Violent acts against women once considered private matters, such as spousal violence, are now considered serious violent crimes (Schneider 2007). One example of this shift was the creation of pro-charging policies for spousal violence in the 1980s, which removed the burden of the decision to lay a charge away from the victim and onto the police and Crown. The creation and growth of domestic violence courts was another notable specialized response to spousal violence (Johnson 2006).

Legislative changes have also been introduced to address specific types of crimes where women are predominantly the victim. *Criminal Code* amendments have included the repeal of the offence of rape and the creation of sexual assault offences in 1983, and the introduction of the offence of criminal harassment in 1993. The above procedural and legislative institutional changes have accompanied an emergence of services for victims of violent crime, notably shelters for abused women and sexual assault centres (Johnson and Dawson 2011).

Despite the changes in responses to the issue, victims of violent crime may still not turn to the legal system or formal sources of support for help. This section uses self-reported victimization data to explore the extent to which victims report their victimization to police, the reasons behind this decision, and victims' use of other services. These patterns are examined separately for spousal violence (including both current and previous spouses) and non-spousal violence. Information pertaining to spousal violence refers to violent victimization in the previous five-year period, while non-spousal violence is based on violent incidents that occurred in the 12 months preceding the survey. Therefore, comparisons between spousal and non-spousal violence should be made with caution.

Police-reported data collected through the Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Survey are then used to examine how often violent incidents get cleared by police, with regard to both the relationship of the accused to the victim and the severity of the offence. Using administrative data from service providers, the availability and use of shelters and other government-based victim services are also examined.

Reporting violence against women to police

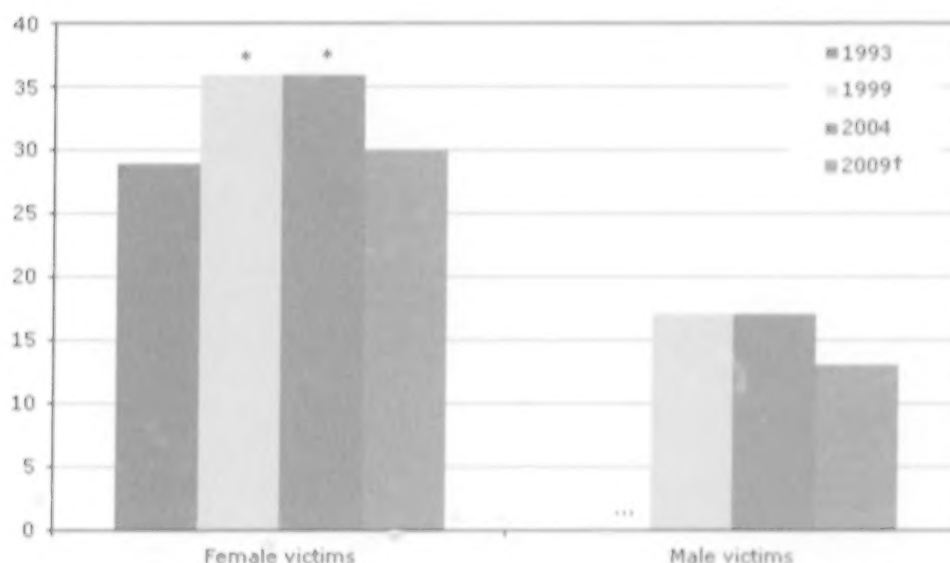
Decrease in reporting spousal violence against women to police

Victimization data suggest that violence against women often goes unreported to police. According to the 2009 General Social Survey (GSS) on Victimization, less than one-third (30%) of female victims indicated that the incident of spousal victimization was reported to police.¹ This represented a decrease from 36% in 2004, the last time the survey was conducted (Chart 4.1). The same drop was not evident for male victims, who continued to be less likely than their female counterparts to state that the incident of spousal violence came to the attention of police (13% in 2009 and 17% in 2004). Gender differences in levels of reporting to police may reflect the finding that male victims experience less severe forms of spousal violence compared to female victims (see Section 1).

Chart 4.1

Reporting rates of spousal violence to police, by sex of victim, Canada, 1993, 1999, 2004, and 2009

percent reported to police



... not applicable

† reference category

* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

Note: Includes legally married, common-law, same-sex, separated and divorced spouses who experienced spousal violence within the previous 5 years. General Social Survey data from the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut were collected using a different methodology and are therefore excluded.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1999, 2004, 2009; Violence Against Women Survey, 1993.

Prior to the decline in reporting of spousal violence against women, levels of reporting to police had increased between 1993 and 1999, followed by a period of stability from 1999 to 2004. Early increases in reporting to police were attributed to a rise in women's confidence in the criminal justice system's ability to respond to spousal victimization (Johnson and Hotton 2001).

In comparison to spousal violence, reporting violence against women committed outside of a spousal relationship to police has been relatively stable since 1999. In 2009, 28% of non-spousal violent incidents against women were reported to police, similar to the proportion in 2004 and 1999. Levels of police contact for non-spousal violence were virtually identical between women and men, contrasting the gender difference evident in spousal violence.

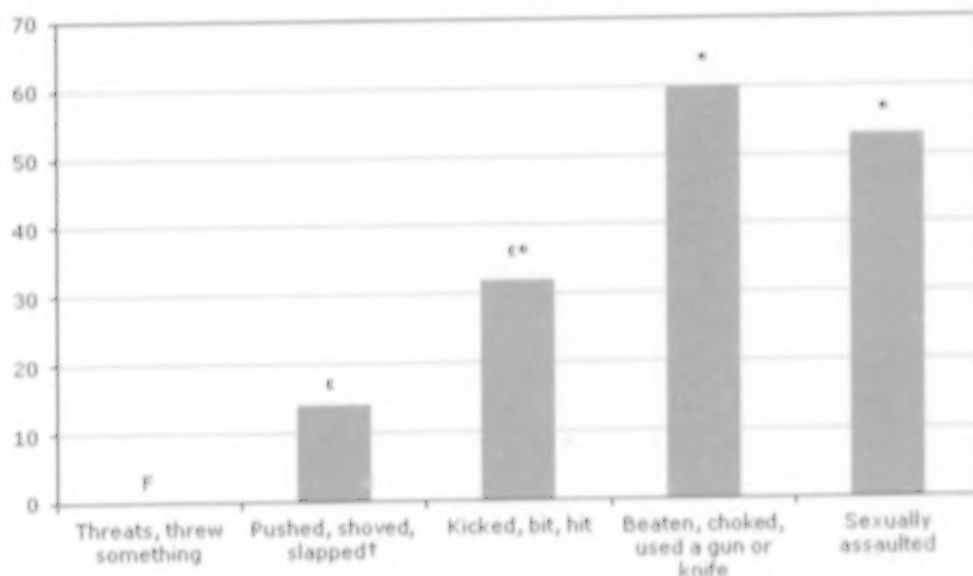
Reporting to police was similar among the provinces. This was the case for both spousal and non-spousal violence against women.

Police more often contacted in the most severe forms of violence

A number of factors can influence whether a violent incident gets reported to police. In the case of spousal violence, increased seriousness or severity of the violence heightens the likelihood of police involvement. More than half of female victims who experienced the most severe forms of spousal violence indicated that police were contacted, including 53% of women who were sexually assaulted and 60% of women who were beaten, choked or had a weapon used against them. This compares to 14%[†] of female victims of spousal violence who experienced less severe forms, namely being pushed, shoved or slapped (Table 4.1; Chart 4.2). Similarly, reporting to police was higher for female spousal victims who sustained physical injury, who feared for their lives and who experienced the greatest number of spousal violence incidents.

Chart 4.2
Reporting rates to police by type of spousal victimization against women, Canada, 2009

percent reported to police



* use with caution

F too unreliable to be published

† reference category

* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

Note: Includes legally married, common-law, same-sex, separated and divorced spouses who experienced spousal violence within the previous 5 years. Data from the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut were collected using a different methodology and are therefore excluded.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, General Social Survey, 2009.

Somewhat contrasting these patterns were violent incidents committed by someone other than a spouse. Levels of reporting were similar for incidents involving physical injury to women and those without any injuries. Police involvement, however, was four times higher when a weapon was used against the female non-spousal victim compared to when no weapon was involved (64% versus 16%). Non-spousal violence against women was also more likely to come to the attention of police when it involved multiple offenders (51%) rather than a lone offender (18%).

The relationship to the perpetrator had no impact on whether police were contacted in non-spousal violence incidents. That is, violent incidents involving a stranger were equally as likely as those committed by someone known to the victim to have come to the attention of the police. This pattern was consistent for both male and female victims.

Non-spousal sexual assaults rarely reported to police

Police, who are responsible for responding to, investigating and substantiating all incidents of violent crime, were rarely made aware of sexual assaults committed by someone other than a spouse. Nine in ten sexual assaults against women (90%) by a non-spousal accused were never reported to police. This was most pronounced for the least severe forms of sexual assault, namely self-reported incidents of sexual touching, where 96% incidents against women were not reported to police. In comparison, 63% of sexual attacks, 60% of physical assaults and 53% of robbery incidents were not reported to police.

Women with lower levels of education more likely to contact police for spousal violence

Victim characteristics can also impact whether violence against women comes to the attention of police, though these characteristics differ between spousal and non-spousal violence victims. For spousal violence, women with the lowest levels of educational attainment and lower incomes (less than \$30,000) were most likely to state that police were contacted (Table 4.2). Educational attainment and income did not impact whether non-spousal incidents were brought to the attention of police.

While the age of the female victim had no bearing on whether police were made aware of incidents of spousal violence, younger women who experienced non-spousal violence were less likely than older women to state that the incident was reported to police (Table 4.3). About 15%³ of non-spousal incidents involving females aged 15 to 24 were reported to the police, compared to 39%³ of incidents involving women aged 25 to 34 and 38% for women aged 35 and older.

Similar levels of reporting between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women, visible and non-visible minority women, and immigrant and non-immigrant women

While Aboriginal women differed from non-Aboriginal women in their risk of victimization, the likelihood of reporting victimization to police did not. Approximately four in ten Aboriginal women victimized by their spouse indicated that police were contacted, which was not significantly different from the proportion for non-Aboriginal women. Likewise, among non-spousal violent incidents involving Aboriginal women, about one-quarter were reported to the police, similar to the proportion for non-Aboriginal women.

Reporting spousal violence incidents to police did not vary between visible minority and non-visibility minority women (Table 4.2). Rates of reporting spousal violence against women were also similar between immigrant and non-immigrant women. It was not possible to examine gender differences among these populations for non-spousal violence due to small counts, though overall reporting rates to police were similar between visible and non-visible minorities, and between immigrants and non-immigrants.⁴

Contacting police often related to women's desire to stop the violence

Reporting victimization to the police is a personal decision, one that involves the consideration of a number of factors. Most often, women reported the incidents of spousal violence to the police themselves (84%). When asked why they turned to the police, a desire to stop the violence and receive protection was by far the most common reason given, at 95% (Table 4.4). This was significantly higher than the proportion of male spousal violence victims who indicated this reason as a motivating factor (70%). A sense of duty was the second most common reason for contacting police among female spousal violence victims (47%). Stopping the violence and a sense of duty were also the leading reasons behind men's decision to report their spousal victimization to police.

Female victims of non-spousal violent crimes were also more likely than male victims to notify police to stop the violence and receive protection (83%). They were equally as likely as male victims to notify the police for other reasons (Table 4.5).

Visiting the scene was the most common police action in violence against women

Victims who said that the police were informed of the incident were asked what actions the police took when notified of the violent incident. The majority (85%) of female victims of spousal violence indicated that the police came to the location of the incident (i.e., visited the scene), which was similar to the proportion of male spousal violence victims (82%). Female victims of spousal violence, however, were more likely than their male counterparts to indicate that the police gave a warning to their spouse, took their spouse away, or arrested or laid charges against their spouse (Table 4.6). Gender differences in police actions may reflect the finding that spousal violence directed at women tends to be more severe than violence perpetrated against men.

Among women who reported non-spousal violence to police, 72% said that the police visited the scene and 73% said a report or investigation was conducted (Table 4.7). Similar police actions were taken in non-spousal violence incidents against men.

Most female victims satisfied with actions of police

Among female victims who indicated that the police were contacted, most were satisfied with the actions of police. About two-thirds (65%) of female spousal violence victims were either somewhat or very satisfied with the actions of police. For violence outside of a spousal relationship, 59% of female victims were satisfied. These levels of satisfaction were similar to those for male victims of both spousal and non-spousal violence.

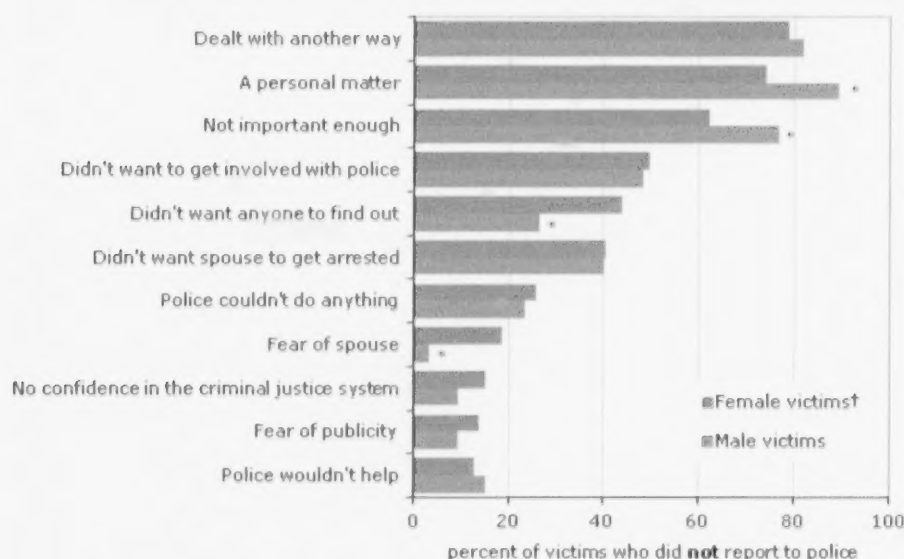
The GSS also asked victims of spousal violence if the behaviour of their abusive spouse changed after police intervention. Almost half (48%) of female spousal victims indicated that the incidents of spousal violence decreased after police were involved (Table 4.6). Another 23%^E said spousal violence stayed the same and 6%^E said it increased.

'Dealt with another way' most common reason for not reporting spousal violence

Women have various reasons for not reporting their experiences of violence to police. Among the 69% of female victims of spousal violence who stated that the incident did not come to the attention of police, dealing with the situation in another way or feeling that the incident was a personal matter were among the most commonly stated reasons for not reporting (79% and 74%). While these reasons were similar to those for men, women were six times more likely than men to say that the incident was not reported out of fear from their spouse (19% versus 3%), and almost twice as likely than men to say that they didn't want anyone to find out about the incident (44% versus 26%)(Chart 4.3).

Chart 4.3

Reason for not reporting spousal violence to police, by sex of victim, Canada, 2009



† reference category

* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

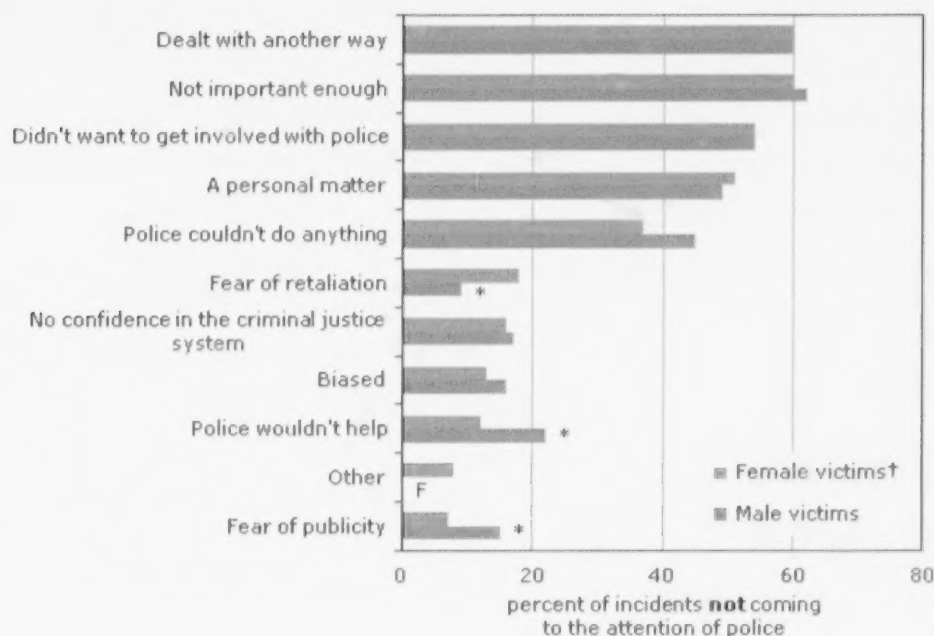
Note: Includes legally married, common-law, same-sex, separated and divorced spouses who experienced spousal violence within the previous 5 years and who indicated that the violence did not come to the attention of police. Figures do not add to 100% due to multiple responses. Data from the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut were collected using a different methodology and are therefore excluded.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2009.

For non-spousal violence, similar reasons for not reporting to police were given. Women were equally as likely to say the incident was not important enough or that they dealt with the incident in another way (60% each). As with spousal violence, fear of retaliation was a greater concern for female victims than male victims (18% versus 9%) (Chart 4.4).

Chart 4.4

Reason for not reporting non-spousal violence to police, by sex of victim, Canada, 2009



† reference category

F too unreliable to be published

* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

Note: Refers to self-reported non-spousal violence within the previous 12 months that did not come to the attention of police. Figures do not add to 100% due to multiple responses. Data from the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut were collected using a different methodology and are therefore excluded.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2009.

Restraining orders

About one in seven female victims of spousal violence obtained a restraining order

Besides seeking help from police, victims can also turn to either criminal courts or civil courts for the additional protection of a restraining or protective order against the perpetrator. Restraining orders are intended to protect victims who fear for their safety or the safety of someone known to them and can contain a number of measures, such as a no contact/no communication order, prohibiting the perpetrator from frequenting a specified place, and out-of-home placements for those accused of spousal violence.

The GSS collected information on whether victims of spousal violence obtained a restraining or protection order from their spouse. In 2009, 15% of female victims indicated that they had obtained this type of protection, three times higher than the proportion of male victims who obtained a restraining order (5%). Recurrence of violence, however, is not always prevented with these orders. One-third (32%) of women said that the terms of the order were breached. Two-thirds (65%) of these women reported the violation to police.

Women's use of social services

Most women disclose their victimization to family or friends

Women often rely on sources other than the criminal justice system for assistance following a victimization experience. In addition to asking victims whether or not they reported the violence to the police, the GSS asked victims if they turned to other sources of support. Eight in ten women victimized by their spouse told family, friends or another source of informal support about the incident. This was higher than the proportion of male spousal violence victims (56%).

Similar to spousal violence, most female victims of non-spousal violence (91%) discussed their victimization experience with someone. However, unlike spousal violence, male victims of non-spousal violence were equally likely as female victims to rely on others for support. Family and/or friends or neighbours were the most common sources of informal support for women, regardless of whether the incident was committed by a spouse or another type of perpetrator.

One-quarter of female victims of spousal violence used formal social services

A variety of social services are available to women who are violently victimized, including counsellors, crisis lines, community centres, shelters, women's centres, and support groups. According to the 2009 GSS, 38% of women who were victimized by their spouse used a social service, two times higher than for male victims (18%). Female victims most often turned to counsellors or psychologists (32%). The next most common services used by women were crisis centres/lines and community/family centres (26% combined) (Table 4.8).

For non-spousal incidents, 12% of women contacted some type of formal victim service, higher than the proportion of male victims (6%).

Text box 4.1

Reporting to police and use of social supports in the territories

Six in ten female victims in the territories reported spousal violence to police

Victimization data for the territories were collected using a different methodology. As a result, analysis of reporting to police and reliance on other supports is examined separately from the provinces.

Consistent with findings from earlier reports, the rate of reporting spousal violence to police in the territories was generally higher than in the provinces. About six in ten female victims of spousal violence (58%) in the past five years had contact with police as a result of the violence, compared to 30% in the provinces. Similar to the provinces, women victimized by their spouse in the territories indicated that police were contacted to stop the violence or receive protection.

According to female victims of spousal violence, the three most common actions taken by police were: conducting an investigation or making a report (84%), visiting the scene (82%) and giving a warning to the accused (81%). As in the provinces, most female victims in the territories were satisfied with the police response to their experiences of spousal violence (69%).

For non-spousal violence, rates of reporting to police in the territories mirror those for the provinces. While small counts prevented reliable estimates by gender, 31% of violent incidents committed against women in the territories were reported to police. Victims indicated that they chose to deal with the incident in some other way (61%), that they did not think the incident was important enough to warrant contacting the police (53%), did not want police involved (51%^E) and/or felt that it was a personal matter that did not concern police (48%^E).

When police were contacted in non-spousal violence incidents, 75% of all victims stated that the police visited the scene and 81% indicated that police made a report or conducted an investigation. It was not possible to look at gender differences due to small counts.

Informal supports often used by female victims

Female victims in the territories often rely on informal sources of support to cope with the violence. Almost nine in ten female victims of spousal violence (88%) turned to informal sources of support, higher than the proportion of male victims (58%^E). However, when the violence involved someone other than a spouse, women were less likely than men to turn to someone for help (77% versus 94%).

Regardless of the type of perpetrator, female victims in the territories most often turned to family members and/or friends or neighbours for support or guidance. In 2009, 79% of women victimized by their spouse confided in a family member and 64% told a friend or neighbour. Similarly, when women were victimized by a non-spouse, more than half turned to family (59%) and/or friends or neighbours (55%^E).

Police-reported response to violence against women

Once an incident of violence against women reaches the attention of police and is investigated, the police may charge the accused or may deal with or clear the incident (i.e., solve) in another way, such as through departmental discretion (e.g., giving the accused a warning, caution or referral to a community-based program). Alternatively, the incident may not be cleared if an accused has not been identified in connection with the incident, or a suspect has been identified but there is insufficient evidence to lay a charge.

Most police-reported violent crimes against women were cleared

Data from the Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Survey show that police cleared 76% of all violent incidents committed against women in 2011. Of these, about seven in ten (71%) resulted in a charge being laid or recommended, with the remaining three in ten cleared by means other than the laying of a formal charge. The most common reasons to clear by other means included the female victim's request not to proceed with formal charges and the use of departmental discretion.

The likelihood of incidents being cleared varied regionally.⁵ The Prairie provinces and the territories generally had the highest clearance rates for police-reported violent crime against women, which was consistent with regional patterns for clearing crime overall (Hotton Mahony and Turner 2012) (Table 4.9).

Different regional variations emerged when examining the proportion of cleared incidents proceeding with formal charges. In particular, the proportion of violent incidents against women resulting in a charge was highest in Ontario (77%) and British Columbia (77%) and lowest in Saskatchewan (57%), Prince Edward Island (57%) and Northwest Territories (51%).⁶

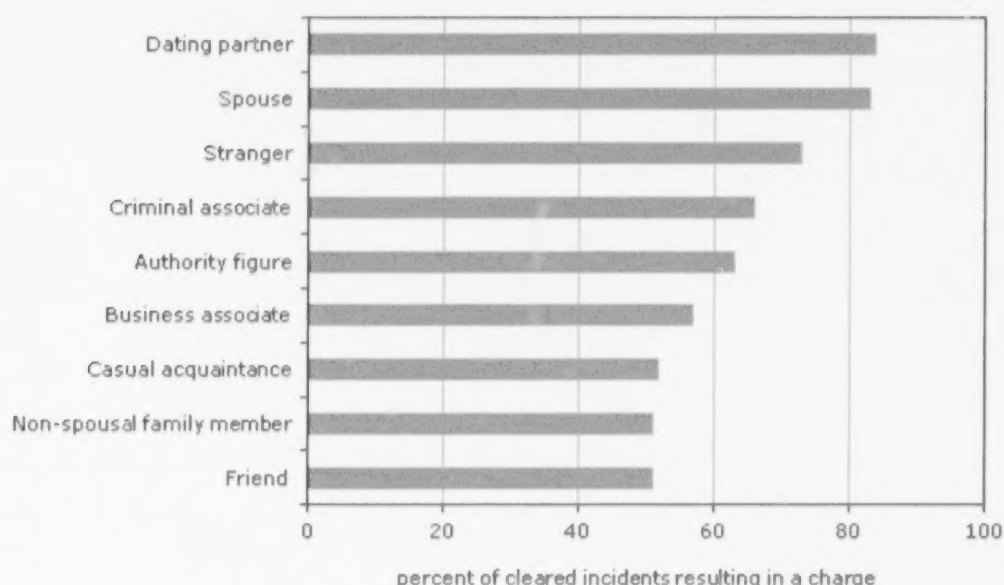
Charges more frequently laid in violent incidents involving spouses and dating partners

The possibility of police solving or clearing an incident of violence against women differed depending on the woman's relationship to the accused. Clearance rates were generally highest when the offender was known to the women, such as a spouse (90%), dating partner (86%) or non-spousal family member (82%). By contrast, stranger-perpetrated violence had the lowest police clearance rates, with less than half (47%) of incidents being solved by police. This pattern is not unexpected given that identifying and apprehending accused persons are generally more difficult when incidents involve someone unknown to the victim.

Once the crime had been solved, the relationship between the victim and the accused also had an impact on whether charges were laid. Spousal and dating violence against women were most likely to result in criminal charges (84% and 83%), while violence perpetrated by non-spousal family members, friends, and casual acquaintances were least likely to proceed with charges (51%, 51% and 52%) (Chart 4.5). It has been suggested that the higher rate of criminal charges for incidents of intimate partner violence may be due to greater levels of injuries and physical assault associated with violence against intimate partners, combined with the existence of pro-charging policies (Sinha 2012).

Chart 4.5

Proportion of cleared incidents of violence against women resulting in a charge, by accused-victim relationship, Canada, 2011



Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

Another notable finding was the relatively higher rate of charging for stranger-perpetrator violence. Although this type of violence against women had the lowest clearance rates, it had the third highest rate of charging at 73% of cleared incidents.

Rate of charging higher for the most severe forms of violence against women

Clearance rates and rates of charging tend to be higher with more severe forms of violence against women. For instance, police solved 85% of incidents involving injury to the female victim, compared to 72% of incidents with no injury.

Among solved crimes, formal charges were pursued in 96% of incidents resulting in major physical injuries to the woman, 80% resulting in minor injuries and 63% with no injuries. Similarly, incidents where a weapon was used against the woman were more likely to result in charges than those incidents with no weapon present (84% versus 69%).

Another factor strongly linked to clearance rates is the type of offence (Hotton Mahony and Turner 2012). Certain offences against women are unlikely to be cleared by either a charge or other means. For instance, 44% of all sexual offences against women and 61% of robberies were unsolved in 2011, meaning that an accused was either not identified or there was insufficient evidence to lay a charge.

The type of offence also impacted whether charges were laid or recommended. In 2011, 83% of solved homicides of women resulted in a formal charge, 94% of solved attempted murders, 98% of level 3 aggravated assaults, and 86% of level 2 assaults with a weapon or causing bodily harm. Less commonly resulting in charges were uttering threats (61%), criminal harassment (60%), and indecent phone calls (17%).

Violent incidents against women more often result in charges than those against men

Violent incidents involving female victims were more likely than those with male victims to be solved and to proceed with formal charges. For instance, 71% of cleared incidents against women resulted in a charge, compared to 63% of incidents against men. These gender differences partly reflect differences in characteristics of violent crimes against women and men, including variations in the types of perpetrators (known perpetrators versus stranger-perpetrated violence) and the severity of the violent crime (e.g., frequency of injury).

Court response to violence against women

Following the laying of a charge, those accused of violent crimes proceed to either provincial court or superior court, depending on the severity of the offence (summary or indictable offence) (Justice Canada 2005). In addition to these traditional criminal courts, perpetrators accused of intimate partner violence can appear in one of the more than 50 dedicated domestic violence courts operating in almost every province and territory. These courts were created to address the unique characteristics of violence within the family and to remedy some of the challenges especially posed by reluctant victims and witnesses in cases of family violence (Johnson 2006). Often times, these courts are reserved for offences that are less serious in nature.

The specific models of specialized domestic violence courts differ between jurisdictions, yet the primary objectives are to:

- provide mechanisms designed to respond to the unique nature of family violence;
- facilitate early intervention and prosecution of violence directed at family members;
- provide appropriate support to victims; and,
- increase offender accountability (Public Health Agency of Canada 2009).

An examination of conviction rates and sentencing patterns in cases of violence against women appearing in traditional criminal courts or dedicated domestic violence courts is difficult, since criminal courts do not routinely collect information on the sex of the victim. In particular, Statistics Canada's Integrated Criminal Court Survey (ICCS) receives data on the characteristics of those accused of violent crimes, including their sex and age, and does not receive any information on victims.⁷ As a result, it is not possible to look at court processing and decisions specific to violence against women.

Treatment programs for abusive men

In some cases, participating in a treatment program is a component of sentencing for those convicted of violence against an intimate partner. A listing of these court-ordered programs for men who behave abusively, as well as community-based treatment programs, had been maintained since 1984 by Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada. Based on these records, the number of treatment programs for violent men generally increased from 1984 to 1998, remained steady from 1998 to 2004, and have recently decreased (Chart 4.6).

Chart 4.6

Number of treatment programs for violent men, Canada, 1984 to 2008

number of programs



Source: Health Canada, *Canada's Treatment Programs for Men Who Abuse Their Partners*, 1994, 1997, 1999, 2002, and 2004. Public Health Agency of Canada, *Canada's Treatment Programs for Men Who Abuse Their Partners*, 2008.

According to the Public Health Agency of Canada (2008), there were 165 treatment programs for abusive men in 2006, similar to the number in 1997. These figures are likely an underestimation, since they do not include many federal, provincial, and territorial correctional-based services.

Shelters for abused women

Outside the formal criminal justice system, there are a range of services for victims of violence against women. One such measure is the system of shelters for abused women, which provide residential services and other forms of support to women and their children leaving violent situations. Currently, shelters exist in every province and territory and provide services to women and child victims of various types of abuse. Shelters are intended to offer abused women and their children a temporary and safe place to live.

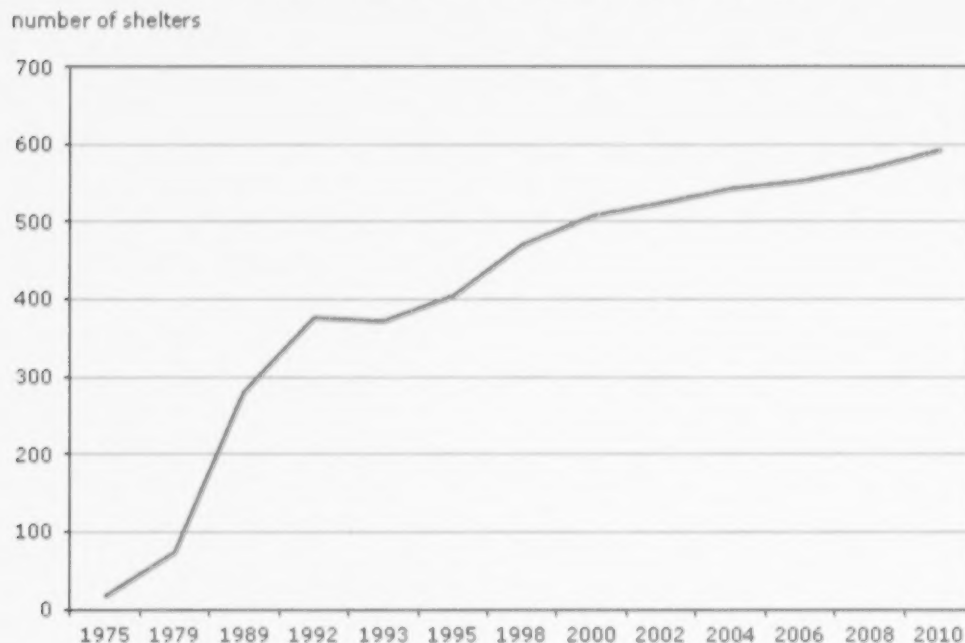
Drawing on data from the Transition Home Survey (THS), a biennial administrative survey of residential facilities in Canada that offer services for abused women seeking shelter, it is possible to examine trends and characteristics of clients served, including services for Aboriginal people.

Increase in the number of shelters for abused women

The number of shelters available for abused women has consistently increased over time. In 2010, 593 shelters were in operation across Canada, an increase of 4% since 2008 and 17% since 2000 (Chart 4.7). All provinces and territories providing data recorded either increases or no changes in the number of residential services in operation since 2008, with Nova Scotia reporting the greatest increase (13%) (Table 4.10).

Chart 4.7

Number of shelters for abused women, Canada, 1975 to 2010



Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Transition Home Survey.

The types of shelters that have increased over the previous decade have relied less on funding from provincial and territorial government sources and more from municipal governments, charitable donations and user fees (Burczycka and Cotter 2011). Reflecting the growth in the number of shelters, particularly high-capacity facilities, the number of beds available to clients has also increased. In particular, there was a 7% increase in bed availability between 2008 and 2010.

Admissions to shelters remain steady

The number of women using shelters has remained relatively stable in recent years. In 2009/2010, there were 64,500 women admitted to shelters across Canada or a rate of 452 admissions per 100,000 women. This was a 2% increase in the rate from 2007/2008. Rates tended to be highest in the west and the territories and lowest in the eastern provinces.

In most shelters, women with parental responsibilities can also be admitted with their children. In 2009/2010, 39,208 children were admitted with their mother or another caregiver, such as a grandmother.

Most women seeking shelter were escaping abuse

On the snapshot day of April 15th, 2010, there were 4,645 women residing in shelters. Most of these women were escaping abuse (71%). Other motivations for seeking shelters included an inability to locate affordable housing (30%), a desire to protect children from suffering from or witnessing abuse (24%), mental health issues (23%) and alcohol and drug abuse (19%).⁸

Despite the increase in the number of shelters and bed availability, findings from the Transition Home Survey indicate that 426 women were turned away from residential facilities on the snapshot day. Half of these women were turned away because the shelter was full, while the remainder were turned away because of mental health issues, use of substances or other problems. In some cases, the client may be referred to another shelter or other type of victim service.

Most shelters provide culturally sensitive programming for Aboriginal women

Among the 593 shelters for abused women, 7% (39) were located on reserves and 25% (146) served people living on reserves. Alberta and Nova Scotia had the highest proportion of shelters on reserves (18% and 17%, respectively), while Manitoba had the highest share of shelters serving clients residing on reserves (48%).

In addition, most shelters reported that they offered some types of culturally sensitive programming for Aboriginal women, including traditional health methods, involvement of spiritual elders and access to materials in Aboriginal languages. In particular, 79% of shelters serving on-reserve populations and 59% not serving on-reserve populations provided Aboriginal culturally sensitive services.

Other victim services

In addition to shelter services, there are a range of other victim services available to women. These include police-based victim assistance programs, court-based services, community-based agencies, sexual assault centres and criminal injury compensation programs. According to the Victims Services Survey (VSS), an administrative survey of victim service providers, there were 911 victim programs in 2009/2010 throughout Canada offering services to both women and men.

Women represented the majority of victims assisted by these victim services. In particular, three-quarters of clients served between April 1, 2009 and March 31, 2010 were female.⁹ Most women sought help to deal with a violent crime (86%), greater than the proportion of men (69%). Among female clients who were victims of violent crime, 35% were seeking help to deal with a sexual-based crime, 60% for other non-lethal violence, and 5% to cope with the loss of a loved one due to a violent crime (Table 4.11). Female clients who were victims of violent crime were also more than twice as likely as male clients to report that an intimate partner was the violent perpetrator (54% versus 24%).

Almost two-thirds of compensation applications were filed by women

Criminal injuries compensation programs are designed to provide monetary compensation to victims of crime to assist in financial hardships resulting from victimization. In 2009/2010, women represented the majority of applicants for criminal injury compensation (64%). Women who received assistance from a compensation or benefit program were most likely to request services in relation to a physical assault (44%) or a sexual assault (28%). In comparison, the proportion of men seeking compensation for a physical assault was 61% and for sexual assault was 11%.

Summary

The criminal justice response to violence against women has shifted over the previous thirty years. Despite these shifts, many women who self-report victimization still do not seek support from the criminal justice system, as evidenced by the recent decrease in reporting spousal violence to police and the stability in rates of reporting for non-spousal violence. Women are more likely to turn to informal sources of support, such as family and friends, according to victimization data.

When violence against women reaches the attention of police, it is most likely to result in criminal charges. Based on police-reported data, this was particularly the case when the violence involved an intimate partner, physical injury or a weapon.

Outside the criminal justice system, a range of services are available to women victimized by their spouse or other perpetrator. While the number of women accessing shelter services has been relatively stable in recent years, the demand for these services is still evident, as some women are turned away from shelters due to full capacity. Women also continue to be more likely than men to turn to formal social services, often seeking help to cope with intimate partner violence and sexual assault.

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Notes

^E use with caution

1. Refers to spousal violence in the previous five-year period.
2. Difference in proportions is not statistically significant.
3. Includes forced or attempted sexual assault by being threatened, held down or hurt in some way.
4. Due to sample size, it was not possible to look at specific visible minorities or details on immigrants, such as the period of arrival.
5. Clearance rates are sensitive to the severity and distribution of crime in a particular jurisdiction (Hotton Mahony and Turner 2012). Provinces and territories with a higher share of "easier to solve crimes", such as offences involving known acquaintances and family members will have higher clearance rates, compared to those provinces and territories with a lower proportion of these types of offences (Paré et al. 2007, Ouimet and Paré 2003).
6. In cases of domestic violence, every Canadian jurisdiction has implemented some form of pro-charging policies. The particular parameters of these pro-charging policies can vary regionally.
7. Victim information is not entered into or maintained in the court information systems, and therefore, victim data are not captured within the ICCS.
8. The total does not add to 100% due to multiple responses.
9. Based on victims where the sex was known. The sex of 38% of victims was not reported.

Detailed data tables

Table 4.1

Percentage of spousal violence victims whose victimization came to the attention of police, by sex of victim and incident characteristics, Canada, 2009

	Female victims	Male victims
Incident characteristics	percent	
Most serious assault		
Threats, threw something	F	F
Pushed, shoved, slapped†	14 ^E	12 ^E
Kicked, bit, hit	32 ^{E*}	12 ^E
Beaten, choked, or used gun or knife	60*	42 ^{E*}
Sexually assaulted	53*	F
Injured		
Not injured	18*	9 ^{E*}
Injured and no medical attention	41*	31 ^E
Injured and received medical attention†	70	F
Frequency of violence		
One incident	15 ^{E*}	F
2 to 5 incidents	30*	21 ^{E*}
6 to 10 incidents	43 ^{E*}	F
More than 10 incidents†	53	36 ^E
Feared for their lives		
No	17*	11 ^{E*}
Yes†	58	54 ^E

^E use with caution

F too unreliable to be published

† reference category

* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

Note: Includes legally married, common-law, same-sex, separated and divorced spouses who experienced spousal violence within the previous 5 years. Data from the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut were collected using a different methodology and are therefore excluded.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2009.

Table 4.2

Percentage of spousal violence victims whose victimization came to the attention of police, by sex of victim and other victim characteristics, Canada, 2009

Victim characteristics	Female victims	Male victims
	percent	
Age of victim (years)		
15 to 24†	36 ^E	F
25 to 34	28 ^E	12 ^E
35 and older	30	16
Education		
High school or less†	41	16 ^E
Some post-secondary	28*	16 ^E
University	25 ^{E*}	F
Household income		
Less than \$30,000†	45	F
\$30,000 to \$99,999	30*	18 ^E
\$100,000 or more	F	9 ^E
Visible minority		
Yes†	28 ^E	F
No	31	12
Immigrant		
Yes†	34 ^E	F
No	29	13
Aboriginal person		
Yes†	38 ^E	F
No	30	13

^E use with caution

F too unreliable to be published

† reference category

* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

Note: Includes legally married, common-law, same-sex, separated and divorced spouses who experienced spousal violence within the previous 5 years. Data from the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut were collected using a different methodology and are therefore excluded.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2009.

Table 4.3
 Percentage of non-spousal violence victims whose victimization came to the attention of police, by sex of the victim and other victim characteristics, Canada, 2009

Victim characteristics	Female victims	Male victims
	percent	
Age of victim (years)		
15 to 24†	15 ^E	22
25 to 34	39 ^{E*}	31
35 and older	38 [*]	40 [*]
Education		
High school or less†	28 ^E	30
Some post-secondary	27	31
University	29	28 ^E
Household income		
Less than \$30,000†	38 ^E	39 ^E
\$30,000 to \$99,999	25 ^E	26
\$100,000 or more	27 ^E	34
Visible minority		
Yes†	F	33 ^E
No	30	30
Immigrant		
Yes†	F	24 ^E
No	28	30
Aboriginal person		
Yes†	24 ^E	F
No	28	30

^E use with caution

F too unreliable to be published

† reference category

* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

Note: Refers to self-reported non-spousal violence within the previous 12 months. Figures do not add to 100% due to multiple responses. Data from the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut were collected using a different methodology and are therefore excluded.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2009.

Table 4.4

Reasons for reporting spousal violence to police, by sex of victim, Canada, 2009

Reasons for reporting	Female victims†	Male victims
	percent	
Stop the violence and receive protection	95	70*
Sense of duty	47	57 ^E
Wanted partner arrested/punished	37	F
On recommendation of someone else	28 ^E	F

^E use with caution

F too unreliable to be published

† reference category

* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

Note: Includes legally married, common-law, same-sex, separated and divorced spouses who experienced spousal violence within the previous 5 years. Figures do not add to 100% due to multiple responses. Data from the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut were collected using a different methodology and are therefore excluded.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2009.

Table 4.5

Reasons for reporting non-spousal violence to police, by sex of victim, Canada, 2009

Reasons for reporting	Female victims†	Male victims
	percent	
Sense of duty	85	80
Stop the violence and receive protection	83	68*
Wanted perpetrator arrested/punished	71	74
On recommendation of someone else	26 ^E	F

^E use with caution

F too unreliable to be published

† reference category

* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

Note: Figures do not add to 100% due to multiple responses. Data from the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut were collected using a different methodology and are therefore excluded.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2009.

Table 4.6
Spousal violence victim's account of police-related involvement, by sex of victim, Canada, 2009

Police-related involvement	Female victims†	Male victims
	percent	
Action police took		
Visited the scene	85	82
Made a report/conduct investigation	83	64*
Gave a warning to the spousal perpetrator	71	48*
Took the spousal perpetrator away	52	19 ^E *
Arrested or laid charges against spousal perpetrator	44	18 ^E *
Took other action	19 ^E	F
Satisfaction with actions of police		
Very or somewhat satisfied	65	52
Very or somewhat dissatisfied	35	41 ^E
Spousal violence after police involvement		
Decreased	48	39 ^E
Stayed the same	23 ^E	25 ^E
Increased	6 ^E	F

^E use with caution

F too unreliable to be published

† reference category

* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

Note: Includes legally married, common-law, same-sex, separated and divorced spouses who experienced spousal violence within the previous 5 years. Figures may not add to 100% due to multiple responses. Data from the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut were collected using a different methodology and are therefore excluded.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2009.

Table 4.7

Non-spousal violence victim's account of police-related involvement, by sex of victim, Canada, 2009

Police-related involvement	Female victims†	Male victims
	percent	
Action police took		
Visited the scene	72	79
Made a report/conduct investigation	73	70
Gave a warning to the perpetrator	49	37
Took perpetrator away	28	28
Arrested or laid charges against perpetrator	27	24 ^E
Took other action	15 ^E	F
Satisfaction with actions of police		
Very or somewhat satisfied	59	66
Very or somewhat dissatisfied	35	33

^E use with caution

F too unreliable to be published

† reference category

Note: Refers to self-reported non-spousal violence within the previous 12 months. Data from the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut were collected using a different methodology and are therefore excluded.**Source:** Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2009.

Table 4.8

Types of social services used by spousal violence victims, by sex of victim, Canada, 2009

Type of services used	Female victims†	Male victims
	percent	
Counsellor or psychologist	32	16*
Crisis centre or line	13	F
Community centre or family centre	13	F
Victim services or witness assistance programs	8 ^E	F
Women's centre	5 ^E	...
Shelter or transition home	4 ^E	...
Men's centre or support group	...	F

... not applicable

^E use with caution

F too unreliable to be published

... not applicable

† reference category

* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)**Note:** Includes legally married, common-law, same-sex, separated and divorced spouses who experienced spousal violence within the previous 5 years. Don't know and not stated are included in the total, but not listed. Therefore totals will not add up to 100%. Data from the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut were collected using a different methodology and are therefore excluded.**Source:** Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2009.

Table 4.9

Clearance status of police-reported violent incidents against women, by province and territory, 2011

Province and territory	Cleared		Total cleared	Not cleared
	By charge	By other means ¹		
	percent			
Newfoundland and Labrador	45	21	66	34
Prince Edward Island	41	31	72	28
Nova Scotia	53	25	78	22
New Brunswick	46	26	72	28
Quebec	50	29	79	21
Ontario	61	16	77	23
Manitoba	56	24	80	20
Saskatchewan	47	36	83	18
Alberta	54	25	79	21
British Columbia	51	15	66	35
Yukon	53	32	85	15
Northwest Territories	45	44	89	11
Nunavut	61	33	94	6
Canada	54	22	76	23

1. 'Cleared by other means' includes complainant requests charges not be laid, reasons beyond the control of the department, departmental discretion, suicide of accused, death of accused, death of witness/complainant, accused is less than 12 years of age, committal of accused to mental hospital, accused in foreign country, accused involved in other incidents, accused already sentenced, diversionary programs, incidents cleared by a lesser statute, incident cleared by other municipal/provincial/federal agency.

Note: Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

Table 4.10

Number of shelters for abused women, beds and admissions of women, by province and territory, 2010

Province and territory	Shelters		Beds		Admissions ¹		
	April 15, 2010	Percent change April 16, 2008 to April 15, 2010	April 15, 2010	Percent change April 16, 2008 to April 15, 2010	Fiscal year 2009/2010	Fiscal year 2009/2010 ²	Percent change in rate 2007/2008 to 2009/2010
		percent		percent		rate	percent
Newfoundland and Labrador	16	7	194	8	578	260	-19
Prince Edward Island	4	...	54	...	187	307	...
Nova Scotia	18	13	304	41	1,391	336	85
New Brunswick	23	5	324	6	1,117	343	-18
Quebec	126	0	1,968	10	15,962	477	14
Ontario	171	7	4,081	1	19,080	344	-2
Manitoba ³	29	0	894	29	3,359	670	-2
Saskatchewan	26	8	546	19	2,349	555	18
Alberta	50	0	1,304	1	8,289	561	-2
British Columbia	111	1	1,586	1	10,343	541	-16
Yukon	6	...	70	...	533	3,897	...
Northwest Territories	6	...	64	...	919	5,653	...
Nunavut	7	...	72	...	418	4,004	...
Canada	593	4	11,461	7	64,525	452	2

... not applicable

1. About 7 in 10 admissions were for reasons of abuse. In addition, the total number of admissions of women includes women who may have been admitted more than once. Each shelter visit is counted as a separate admission. Not all facilities reported fiscal year admissions data to the Transition Home Survey.

2. Rates are calculated per 100,000 women aged 15 years and over.

3. Numbers may be different from numbers produced by Manitoba Victim Services due to difference in scope and methodology.

Note: Rates are based upon July 1st population estimates of women aged 15 years and over. Different methodologies for the calculation of rates may have been used in the past; thus, comparisons to previous reports should be made with caution. Due to the variability in small numbers, percent changes have not been calculated when the number of shelters is below 10 in any given year.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Transition Home Survey.

Table 4.11

Clients served by victim service providers, by sex of victim and type of violent crime, Canada, May 27, 2010

Type of violent crime	Female		Male	
	number	percent	number	percent
Homicide ¹	154	3	70	5
Other offences causing death ¹	95	2	77	5
Sexual assault	1,922	35	379	26
By spouse, ex-spouse, intimate partner	549	10	99	7
By other family member	579	11	102	7
By non-family member relationship	794	14	178	12
Other violent offences	3,323	60	917	64
By spouse, ex-spouse, intimate partner	2,434	44	247	17
By other family member	273	5	140	10
By non-family member relationship	616	11	530	37
Total violent crime	5,494	100	1,443	100

1. Refers to a loss of a loved one due to a violent crime.

Note: Based on responses from 729 victim service providers. Percentages are based on total violent crime.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Victim Services Survey, 2009/2010.

Survey descriptions

Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey

The Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR2) Survey collects detailed information on criminal incidents that have come to the attention of, and have been substantiated by Canadian police services. Information includes characteristics pertaining to incidents (weapon, location), victims (age, sex, accused-victim relationships) and accused persons (age, sex). In 2011, data from police services covered 99% of the population of Canada.

The UCR2 Trend Database (2009 to 2011) represents 99% of police services in Canada. Analysis of this three-year trend database is limited to only those offences that have complete victim records and where UCR offence classification has remained constant over the three-year period. For the purpose of this *Juristat* article, the offences included in the trend analysis include attempted murder, physical assault (levels 1, 2, and 3) and sexual assault (levels 1, 2, and 3).

Homicide Survey

The Homicide Survey collects detailed information on all homicides that have come to the attention of, and have been substantiated by, Canadian police services. Information includes characteristics pertaining to incidents (weapon, location), victims (age, sex, accused-victim relationship), and accused persons (age, sex). Coverage for the Homicide Survey has represented 100% of the population since recording began in 1961. The count for a particular year represents all homicides reported in that year, regardless of when the death actually occurred.

General Social Survey on Victimization

In 2009, Statistics Canada conducted the victimization cycle of the General Social Survey (GSS) for the fifth time. Previous cycles were conducted in 1988, 1993, 1999 and 2004. The objectives of the survey are to provide estimates of Canadians' personal experiences of eight offence types, examine risk factors associated with victimization, examine reporting rates to police, measure the nature and extent of spousal violence, measure fear of crime and examine public perceptions of crime and the criminal justice system.

Sampling

The target population included all persons 15 years and older in the 10 Canadian provinces, excluding full-time residents of institutions. The survey was also conducted in the three Canadian territories using a different sampling design and its results were published in a separate report in 2012. Households were selected by a telephone sampling method called Random Digit Dialling (RDD). Households without telephones or with only cellular phone service were excluded. These two groups combined represented approximately 9% of the target population (Residential Telephone Service Survey, (RTSS), December 2008). Therefore, the coverage for 2009 was 91%.

Once a household was contacted, an individual 15 years or older was randomly selected to respond to the survey. The sample in 2009 was approximately 19,500 households, a smaller sample than in 2004 (24,000).

Data collection

Data collection took place from February to November 2009 inclusively. The sample was evenly distributed over the 10 months to represent seasonal variation in the information. A standard questionnaire was administered by telephone using computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI). A typical interview lasted 45 minutes. Prior to collection, all GSS questions went through qualitative and pilot testing.

Response rates

Of the 31,510 households that were selected for the GSS Cycle 23 sample, 19,422 usable responses were obtained. This represents a response rate of 61.6%. Types of non-response included respondents who refused to participate, could not be reached, or could not speak English or French. Respondents in the sample were weighted so that their responses represent the non-institutionalized Canadian population aged 15 years or over, in the ten provinces. Each person who responded to the 2009 GSS represented roughly 1,400 people in the Canadian population aged 15 years and over.

Data limitations

As with any household survey, there are some data limitations. The results are based on a sample and are therefore subject to sampling error. Somewhat different results might have been obtained if the entire population had been surveyed. This *Juristat* article uses the coefficient of variation (CV) as a measure of the sampling error. Any estimate that has a high CV (over 33.3%) has not been published because the estimate is too unreliable. In these cases, the symbol 'F' is used in place of an estimate in the figures and data tables. An estimate that has a CV between 16.6 and 33.3 should be used with caution and the symbol 'E' is referenced with the estimate. Where descriptive statistics and cross-tabular analysis were used, statistically significant differences were determined using 95% confidence intervals.

Using the 2009 GSS sample design and sample size, an estimate of a given proportion of the total population, expressed as a percentage is expected to be within 0.95 percentage points of the true proportion 19 times out of 20.

Methodology for the multivariate analysis

Risk factors for victimization seldom exist in isolation. For example, being young is often associated with participating in evening activities, both of which can be risk factors for violent victimization. To evaluate the independent effect of each factor to the risk of victimization, logistic regression modeling techniques were used. By doing so, it was possible to identify factors that independently predict women's risk of self-reported violent victimization, even after controlling for the potential effects of other factors.

Separate logistic regression models for women and men predicting spousal as well as non-spousal victimization were tested. For both spousal and non-spousal models, a 12 month reference period was used, since many risk factors, such as age, can change over time.¹

Transition Home Survey

The Transition Home Survey (THS) was developed under the federal government's Family Violence Initiative in consultation with provincial and territorial governments and transition home associations. Since 1993, the objectives of the survey have been to collect information on the characteristics of all residential services for abused women and their children during the previous 12 months of operation. In addition, the THS collects information on selected characteristics for the women residing in these shelters on a specified 'snapshot' day.

Included in the scope of the THS are shelters that serve a population broader than abused women, such as shelters admitting men as well as women and shelters admitting people for reasons other than abuse. Facilities that exclusively serve males and shelters that do not provide residential services are not included in the THS. The scope of the THS is limited to those facilities that come to the attention of Statistics Canada through its consultations with provincial and territorial governments and transition home and other associations.

Of the 593 residential facilities providing services to abused women and their children, 518 returned their questionnaires for a response rate of 87%. For those respondents who did not provide their information through the questionnaire, and for those respondents who did not answer some of the key questions on their survey forms, an imputation procedure was used to estimate the missing data.

Victim Services Survey

The Victim Services Survey (VSS) is funded by the Department of Justice Canada's Policy Centre for Victim Issues. It was developed in consultation with federal, provincial and territorial ministries responsible for justice and victim services, as well as a number of victim service providers from across Canada. The objectives of the survey are to provide a profile of victim service providers, information on the types of services offered and an overview of the clients who use them through a snapshot of clients on a given day. In addition, the survey collects standardized information from criminal injuries compensation and other financial benefit programs regarding applications for compensation and awards to victims of crime.

The VSS is a mail-out/mail-back paper questionnaire and is intended to be a census of victim service providers that fall within its scope. For administrative reasons, some head office locations submitted one form including data for all service locations under their administration. Of the 917 victim service providers and criminal injuries compensation programs eligible to respond, 389 sent forms representing data for 787 victim service providers and six criminal injuries compensation programs and other financial benefit programs. This resulted in a response rate of 86%.

The majority of service providers deemed ineligible to respond had either closed or were otherwise classified as outside the scope of the survey. An examination of provincial and territorial response rates showed that Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island and Manitoba had a response rate of 100%. This was followed by New Brunswick (95%), Saskatchewan (92%), Ontario (88%), Alberta (88%), Quebec (87%), British Columbia (82%), Yukon (80%), Nova Scotia (76%), Nunavut (50%) and Northwest Territories (33%). The response rate for individual survey questions on which data in this article are based ranged from 86% to 100%.

In 2009/2010, the VSS questionnaire was modified to more accurately reflect the situation of victim services in Canada. The frame for the survey was updated for the 2009/2010 cycle of the VSS. Comparison with previous cycles is not possible for all variables.

Note

1. Sexual orientation was not included in the models since only those aged 18 years and older were asked about their sexual orientation, while other factors were assessed for those aged 15 years and over. While it would be possible to limit analysis to those aged 18 years and over, this would reduce the sample size.